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The
Bayeux
Tapestry

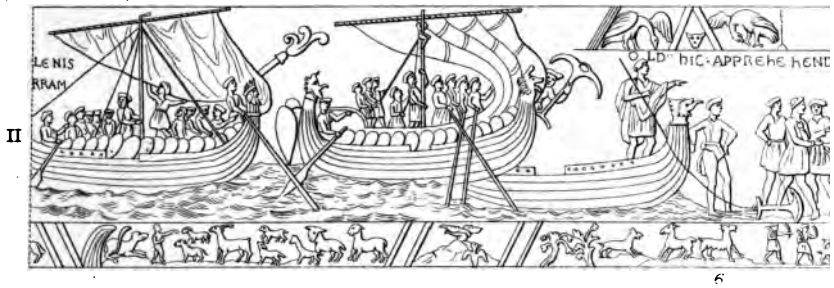


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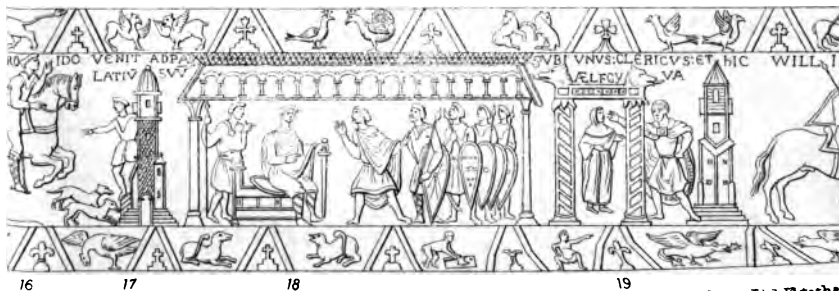
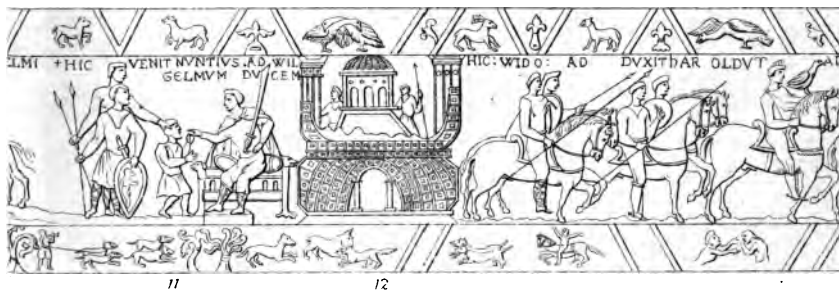
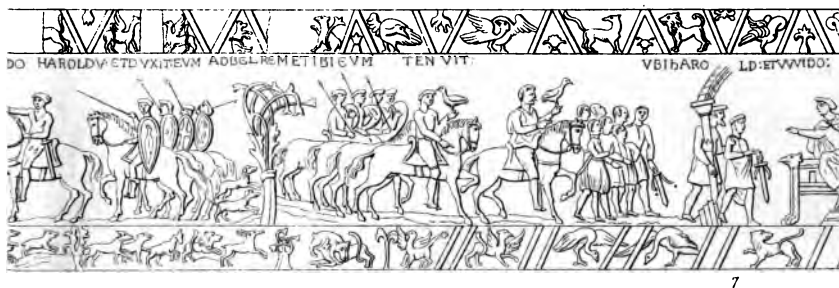
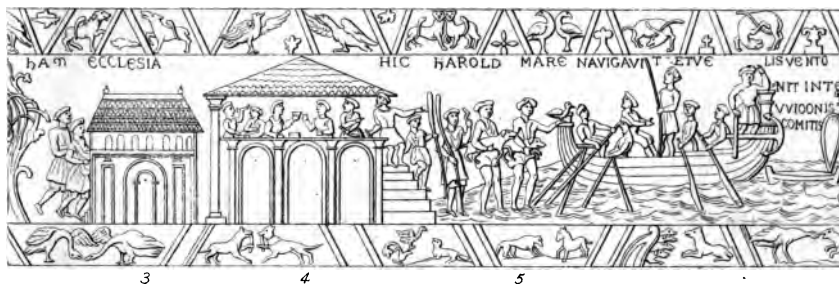
The Bay

These plates are copied from the Atlas to Thierry's Hist de la Conquête d'Angleterre.



x. Tapestry

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Doy & Son, Litho to the

THE
BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

AN
HISTORICAL TALE OF THE ELEVENTH
CENTURY.

FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME EMMA L

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With a Fac-simile of the Tapestry.

BRIGHTON:
H. AND C. TREACHER, 1, NORTH STREET;
LONDON : HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO.
1858.

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The Bayeux Tapestry.

AN HISTORICAL TALE OF THE XI. CENTURY.



CHAPTER I.

A HUNTING PARTY.

TOWARDS the beginning of the month of August, in the year 1066, a band of cavaliers were seen wending their way through the thick mazes of one of the extensive forests, which, at that period, covered the hills that surround the town of Rouen.

Though bent on the pleasures of the chase alone, these gallant knights were clad in coat of mail, and each wore the helmet, or bassinet, in use in the eleventh century. From the girdle hung a long hilted poniard, and a battle-axe was suspended from the saddle-bow. A long train of attendants followed; some leading the hounds, or sounding the horn, while others were employed in bearing their masters' shields and lances.

This warlike display, in a party of pleasure, is sufficiently accounted for by the unsettled and

excited state of Normandy at that period. Duke William had recently summoned the Norman nobles and their armed retainers to assemble round his banner, announcing that he had no less a project in view, than the conquest of England.

The remission of their sins was promised to all who took up arms on this occasion. But this supposed means of salvation, so well in harmony with the ideas of the times, had the disadvantage of confusing all notions of morality; for the greater number of those who hastened to obey their Prince's summons did not scruple to gratify their love of pleasure, or of mischief, whenever an opportunity occurred on the road.

The party of huntsmen journeyed on, in merry mood, till they came to an opening in the forest, diverging into various paths. Prepared as they were for the attack of bands of robbers, or wild beasts, which equally infested the woods, their surprise may be imagined at the sight which met their view. Two young maidens, apparently exhausted with fatigue, were reclining at the foot of a tree. One of them was remarkably beautiful, and her mien and bearing alike denoted that she was of noble birth. She wore the white dress of a novice. Her companion, who was very young, had nothing striking about her, save the dazzling brilliancy of her complexion; and, judging from her dress, she was most likely the daughter of a rich burgher. She wore a skirt of blue woollen stuff, with scarlet

stripes (such as may be seen at the present day among the Norman peasantry). Her bodice was long waisted, and fitted close to the shape, whilst her mantle, also of woollen stuff, but of a lighter material than the dress, was adorned with a chaperon, or hood.

On beholding these young girls, the cavalier who rode at the head of the party immediately dismounted ; and advancing towards them, demanded by what extraordinary chance they were thus alone and unprotected at the entrance of a forest, at a time, too, when the Duke's proclamation for the gathering of his armed bands rendered even the public roads unsafe for ladies, whatever their rank and condition, and whatever the garb they chose to assume. Saying these words, he glanced at the dress of the novice.

The novice, who had risen on the approach of the huntsmen, replied with dignity that her name was Margaret d'Anscarise; and the tone of her voice sufficiently indicated that, in her belief, that name alone was sufficient to guard her against suspicion, and prevent any false construction from being put upon her actions. She added, nevertheless, that being an orphan, and deprived of all protection, she had taken refuge with a distant relative, a nun in the convent of St. Préaux ; that an attempt had there been made to constrain her to take the veil, which she had resisted, knowing it to be in direct opposition to the projects formerly

entertained by her father, and which she felt herself bound to accomplish ; and, ignorant of the Duke's proclamation, had left the convent, and sallied forth to seek protection at the court of William.

" And by what means do you, the daughter of a rebel, expect to obtain this protection ?" demanded the stranger.

" By the Duke of Normandy's sense of justice," she replied, resolutely. " My father expiated his disloyalty with his life, when I was yet an infant, alike unconscious of, as irresponsible for, his offence."

The stranger smiled, evidently pleased with this answer ; then added—" But how can you possibly penetrate into the Duke's presence, for he is scarcely as accessible as a simple cavalier, or a worthy burgher of Rouen ?"

" Oh ! as to that, I have not the slightest anxiety. The head cook of the palace is the affianced husband of Mabile, my attendant, who is my foster-sister ; her father is a respectable burgher, a furrier by trade....."

" *Par la splendeur de Dieu !*" cried the knight, in a tone of anger, " I have not asked you for an account of the birth and parentage of your foster-sister."

The young girls looked at each other in surprise, quite at a loss to comprehend the meaning of this violent outburst. It was, however, but momentary,

for the stranger immediately added in a milder tone—

“ I flatter myself that I possess at least as much credit at Court as your head cook, Mabile’s affianced husband ; but, as it is impossible that you can traverse the town of Rouen in your present dress, escorted by a band of huntsmen, you shall be taken to the Castle of Darnetal, where Dame Ansberge, the keeper’s wife, will furnish you with the necessary toilette. To-morrow, I will go with a suitable escort to fetch you ; and, *par la splendeur de Dieu !* you shall be presented to the Duke, or I will forfeit my name.”

“ My lord,” said Margaret d’Anscarise, in a firm and dignified tone, “ is this asylum offered me in all courtesy and honour ?”

“ I swear it !” said the knight ; “ I consider it a safe asylum for my five daughters, who, in addition to three sons, compose my numerous family ; and, assuredly, it would ill become their father to act the part of a thoughtless young cavalier.”

The countenance of the stranger, who, was of middle age, with handsome features, bore the expression of one accustomed to command ; while there was nothing about him to indicate that he could be led away by feelings of a softer nature.

“ Roger de Beaumont !” he cried, and one of the huntsmen immediately stepped forward at the call ; “ my trusty friend, take care of these young maidens, and conduct them to the Castle of Dar-

netal." He then took the knight aside, whispered a few words, to which the Sire de Beaumont replied by a smile; and, having bowed to the stranger knight, turned to the fugitives, and offered to conduct them to the Castle.

Darnetal was not far distant. The Sire de Beaumont walked before them in profound silence. On leaving the forest, they entered a lovely valley; and, at the sight of the verdant meadows, intersected by a thousand bright and murmuring streams, Margaret felt the liveliest emotions of delight; for, as she had truly told the stranger, she had long been immured within a cloister, whose gloomy walls had shut the beauties of nature completely from her sight.

On looking round to take a view of the magnificent scenery, through which they were then passing, she observed that a group of cavaliers had halted at the entrance of the forest. The brilliancy of their armour, the flashing of their helmets in the sunlight, and the varied hues of their party-coloured scarfs, added yet another charm to the bright panorama before her. When she became aware that the knights had stationed themselves at this post to watch over her and her companion, in their transit through the valley, her thoughts naturally reverted to the stranger, whose aspect, notwithstanding the kindness which he had shown to her, inspired her with feelings of undefinable awe.

But, before Margaret had time to indulge in conjectures, they had reached the end of their journey. The Castle was a small edifice, surrounded with battlemented walls and a deep moat. A square tower with a balustrade of Gothic open work at the top, seemed detached from the rest of the building. On looking up, Margaret could not repress an exclamation of delight and surprise at the beauty of its architecture. The Sire de Beaumont explained that the tower had been built by the direction of an Italian monk, named Lanfranc; and he added, in a half whisper, that different countries required different customs, as this very tower proved. For open balustrades were as useless in the fogs of Normandy, as the learning and science of the indolent and speculative inhabitants of the South would be to the brave and active descendants of Rollo.

He had but just concluded his observations, when they crossed the drawbridge. Knocking with an air of authority at the gate, he and his party obtained instant admission. "Dame Anselme!" he cried, in so loud a voice that the respectable matron, distaff in hand, immediately appeared in obedience to his summons.

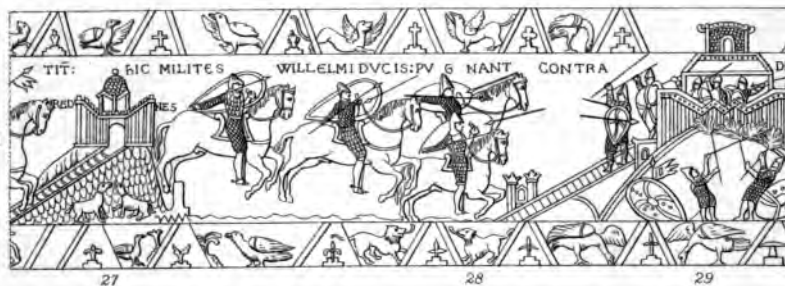
A short colloquy ensued between her and the knight; and the Dame, making a low curtsy to Margaret, and even extending this mark of respect to the furrier's daughter, offered to conduct them into the Castle.

Mademoiselle d'Anscarise turned to express her thanks to the Sire de Beaumont, and to seek a few explanations ; when, before she could speak, he walked hurriedly away, and crossed the drawbridge. The gate was immediately closed behind him ; and, by this means, an end was put to all attempts at conversation.

V



VI



VII



VIII





CHAPTER II.

THE CASTLE OF DARNETAL.

MANY among our readers, who are most familiar with the history of Normandy, may have forgotten that in 1053, some thirteen years previous to the events we are about to narrate, the Count d'Arques, one of the sons of Richard II., had conspired to place himself on the ducal throne, to the prejudice of William, his nephew.

William had found little difficulty in crushing this conspiracy; and he allowed the Count to escape with his life, but despoiled him of his possessions, and banished him the country.

The fugitive Count found an asylum under the roof of Eustache, Count of Boulogne, where his son Henry, a child six or seven years of age, was conveyed to him by a faithful domestic.

Amongst the partisans of the Count d'Arques, the Seigneur d'Anscarise had shown himself the

most zealous. Having one only daughter, the sole heiress of his domains and his name, the great desire of his heart was to form, through her, an alliance with the Ducal house; and the pretender, delighted to secure the Count's services upon these terms, willingly consented to an engagement between his son and the young Margaret, then in her earliest childhood.

The rebellious party was easily vanquished. The Count d'Anscarise perished sword in hand; and his widow, stripped of her fortune, and abandoned by her friends, found an obscure but safe retreat in the humble dwelling of her daughter's faithful nurse.

Intense grief, and the recollections of past happiness, added to the privations she had to undergo, shortened the life of the Countess. She expired when Margaret was only twelve years of age; and, on her death-bed, she commended her daughter to the care of a distant relative, a nun in the Convent of St. Préaux; but a presentiment of evil caused her to exact a solemn pledge from the young girl, that she would remain faithful to the sacred engagement which her parents, in her name, had contracted with the proscribed family of the Count d'Arques.

This brief account of preceding events is necessary to make the reader understand how it happened that so pious and modest a young lady, as Margaret, should be flying from her convent,

and wandering about the country, accompanied by a single female attendant.

We left Dame Ansberge conducting the two maidens, committed to her care, to the apartment known in the Castle of Darnetal as the "*Chambre d'Honneur*," and which was allotted to guests of noble birth. It was a spacious chamber, wainscotted with oak to the height of three feet; above this, the walls were stuccoed of a yellow colour, and the vaulted roof was supported by oak rafters. The chimney, which occupied nearly one entire side of the apartment, was ornamented with a shield, on which was represented a sculptured lion. Opposite to the chimney, at the further end of the room, stood a beautiful chest or *bahut*.

On opening the chest, Dame Ansberge, addressing Margaret, said—"This contains dresses of every description, for the use of the Duchess Matilda and her daughters, when they sojourn here to enjoy the recreation of the chase. I am ordered to place them at your service." With these words, she retired "to prepare," as she said, "refreshments for the noble Lady d'Anscarise and her companion."

Left alone with Mabile, Margaret proceeded to change her dress; and, with becoming delicacy and good taste, she selected the most simple she could find. This was a plain embroidered robe of soft texture and of a gray colour, which nearly fitted the ex-novice. She then chose a small

mantle, and this, fastened on the shoulders, fell in graceful folds upon the arms, and formed a sort of open sleeve. A narrow circlet of silver lace replaced the white linen cap and bands, which concealed the young girl's beautiful brown hair ; and Margaret, on beholding her captive ringlets once more at liberty, felt the liveliest emotions of joy.

“ Oh ! Mabile, how greatly I must have altered, since the day when the dress of a novice was forced upon me—let us hasten to conceal it at the bottom of this chest ; and, now, give me my little casket—happy am I in having rescued it from the hands of my venerable relative.”

“ It is to me, most assuredly, that you are indebted for this,” said Mabile.

“ Yes ! to you alone, Mabile, for this and for my present safety. But come, I must put on a few of my mother's jewels.....” Tears started to her eyes. “ My mother ! in the midst of poverty, privations, and sorrow, she still thought of her child, and was able to preserve this treasure for me !”

“ And, in truth, she did well,” replied Mabile, putting a handsome gold chain round Margaret's neck ; “ for, without these jewels, how could people know that you were a lady of noble birth ? You could not make known your rank to every passer by, as you did to the gallant cavaliers we met in

the forest. But why not put on three or four rows of pearls besides the chain?"

"No, Mabile, I should look like one of the images in the convent chapel of Nôtre Dame."

"Oh! if I were a lady, I would cover myself with jewels from head to foot, just like the Princess Judith, our Duke's niece. I saw her last Easter holidays, and she was one blaze of jewels and gold; but do what she will, she cannot make herself look pretty; and Wadard told me that she was as wicked as it is possible to be—she is not like her cousin Elgiva."¹

This flow of words was interrupted by the appearance of Dame Ansberge, who entered bearing a tray on which were slices of meat, placed on small wheaten cakes, which served for plates, and two horn cups ornamented with silver rims and circlets. Besides this, Dame Ansberge held in her hand a small pitcher of cider, for which favourite beverage Normandy was quite as celebrated in those days, as it is at present.

"You were speaking of our noble Princesses," observed Dame Ansberge, with all the freedom of a privileged housekeeper; "go where you will, you can never meet their equals! First, there is the Duchess Matilda, a saint from heaven, charitable to the poor, and liberal in her gifts to the convents; and the Princess Adela, and Princess Constance, who are soon to be married; then their sisters, Agatha and Cecily—the last is destined

to take the veil. You will not see any of them to-morrow; for they are going to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, at Caen—a magnificent monastery, built by the Duchess Matilda, to obtain the revocation of the sentence of excommunication pronounced against her. You can know nothing of this—you were scarcely born then; but, in those troubled times, no religious ceremonies were permitted to be performed in the churches—no marriages, no confession—the baptism of infants only was allowed—poor innocents! they, at least, had no hand in the matter, and it would have been hard to deprive them of their share of Paradise, simply because our Duke had chosen to espouse his cousin.”

“ I have heard my mother relate this,” interrupted Margaret, who was anxious to learn something of the Court to which she had been promised an introduction, and of the unknown protector sent to her no doubt from heaven; “ and so we shall not see the young Princesses?”

“ You shall see my foster-daughter, my dear and unfortunate Elgiva.”

“ Unfortunate!” cried Mabile, “ how can that be, since she is the daughter of a Prince?”

“ Oh! that has nothing to do with it, for our Duchess, whose father was certainly a Prince, and whose mother was neither more nor less than the daughter of the King of France..... Oh! if I were a gossip, I could tell you sad histories. But about

the affairs of the great and powerful, the less we say the better."

"And the Princess Elgiva?" persisted Margaret.

"Ah! poor angel! she was affianced to an English Prince, a handsome young cavalier, who often came here, and was known for his kindness and goodness to all around him. Nothing could be more delightful than to see them together when they joined the hunting parties, conversing gaily, and so wrapt up in each other, that they seemed entirely to forget the pleasures of the chase. It was at that time that the Castle was put in order, just as you see it now. The dress which you wear belonged to my poor young lady, and when the Duke, her father, quarrelled with Prince Harold, 'Nurse,' said she, tears streaming down her cheeks, 'you will stay here, pray take care that everything remains as it is at present; that when I return, I may at least find unchanged the spot which witnessed my lost happiness.' And I have carefully obeyed her wishes; everything, even the most insignificant object, is exactly where it was, when Prince Harold came to Darnetal for the last time."

It would be foreign to our purpose to relate the whole of Dame Ansberge's conversation with the fugitive maidens; let it suffice to say that it was carried on to the satisfaction of both parties. Margaret possessed a large portion of that quality which is usually considered an attribute of the daughters of Eve—curiosity; and a residence of

some duration within the walls of a cloister had not tended to weaken it. On the other hand, the good Dame's loquacity was such as to set all the stenographers in the world at defiance ; and, as not even their assistance could be procured on this occasion, the reader must be deprived of hearing much that was doubtless very interesting.

Encouraged by Dame Ansberge's frankness, Margaret did not conceal from her the situation in which she was placed ; but, when she alluded to the subject of her mysterious protector, in the hope of obtaining some clue to his rank or station, the worthy Dame became cold and reserved. She merely observed that he must be some nobleman possessed of great influence, since the Sire de Beaumont, acting in concert with him, had thought proper to put the whole Castle, and even the wardrobe of the Princesses, at her disposal. She added that on the morrow, after the midday meal, an escort would be sent to conduct her to Court.

CHAPTER III.

THE ATTACK.

ON the morrow, at the appointed hour, Margaret, accompanied by her foster-sister, directed her steps towards the square tower, of which mention has been made in a former chapter. They mounted on the platform which commanded a view of the surrounding valleys. The lofty spires and closely built houses of Rouen, the thick clusters of trees bordering the moat which surrounded the town, were visible in the distance; and, on the verge of the horizon, could be distinguished the blue ridges of Mont St. Catherine, forming, as it were, a boundary to this charming landscape.

Though apparently lost in the contemplation of the bright picture before her, Margaret was in reality less occupied in studying the beauties of nature, than in watching the incidents on the road which led to the castle. A troop of armed horsemen

were at that moment galloping up the avenue; they suddenly disappeared, concealed by the trees, and in a few minutes they were heard to knock loudly at the postern gate of the drawbridge—their rough and threatening voices were raised high above the clang of arms, and Margaret and her companion could distinctly hear the supposed Captain of the band declare that, if the gate were not opened on the instant, he would find means to effect an entrance in spite of all opposition.

Alarmed by a declaration which indicated hostile intentions, Margaret feared that her retreat had been discovered, and that the Abbess of St. Préaux had sent to enforce her return to the convent; and, recollecting the promise made to her mother on her deathbed, she resolved to resist this oppression to the utmost. Margaret, however, was quite mistaken in her conjectures, for the good sisters, from whose convent she had fled, were contented to employ, in addition to their old lame gardener's researches in the neighbourhood, the prayers of the sisterhood as the only means of bringing back the lost sheep to the fold. Ignorant that she had so little to fear from the quarter that she most dreaded, the lady d'Anscarise, in order to judge better of the danger which menaced her, placed herself at the angle of the tower; and bending over the balustrade, was thus enabled to overlook part of the drawbridge; while Mabile, kneeling by her side, and clinging to the skirt of her dress, commended herself to all the

Saints in Paradise, devoutly entreating their pardon for having assisted in the escape of a novice.

From the position she occupied, Margaret could easily count her assailants, who were seven in number. Scarcely had she ascertained this fact, when three cavaliers emerged from a cross road, and rushed upon them. One of them in loud and angry tones cried out "That he would not permit, *par la splendeur de Dieu!* that a castle belonging to the Duke of Normandy should be thus audaciously attacked."

Margaret uttered an exclamation of joy—when she saw the noble charger, the brilliant armour, the glittering helmet, and, above all, the haughty and commanding air of the cavalier; she felt that she could not be mistaken—it was her unknown protector of the forest.

Scarcely had she recognised him, when the combat began. Alas! the knights had seven adversaries to face; but, if numbers were against them, they had the advantage of skill. Three of the enemy were soon unhorsed and rolling in the dust, while the others fled, or were made prisoners.

Margaret, in breathless suspense, lost not one incident of the fight. One of the vanquished party soon rose, and whispered a few words to the unknown knight, who appeared struck with astonishment at the communication.

The horn sounded a few signal notes, the postern gate was opened, and the knight, whose words were

distinctly heard from the square tower, exclaimed—
“Fools! why did you not say you acted by the orders of the Duchess?” Then turning to one of his followers, he said—“No doubt my mischievous niece Judith has been gossiping—what a viper she is! But, Roger, we must seek these cowards; they are retainers of the Duchess, and we must give them money to buy balsams and cataplasms. Belïsme and I will return to our men, and we will send you an escort worthy of the name. As for myself, I will meddle no more in this business; I have, by my beard, played the squire to errant damsels long enough! I fancied myself sufficiently gray to render assistance to persons in need of assistance, without our good Duchess laying her interdict on my poor services.” So saying, the knight burst out laughing, and, beckoning to his companion, both turned into the avenue and disappeared.

After their departure, Roger de Beaumont called together the small troop, which, as it appeared, had been sent by the Duchess. Those who had been thrown to the ground soon found their feet again; and, accustomed to this rough play, they were not long in recovering from the shocks and contusions which resulted from their fall. On the arrival of the promised escort, the Sire de Beaumont sent to request Margaret to prepare for her speedy departure. She took leave of good Dame Ansberge,

and was soon, as well as Mabile, without more ceremony placed on horseback, behind a man-at-arms ; then, on a signal from the Sire de Beaumont, the cavalcade took the road to Rouen.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INCIDENT ON THE ROAD.

THE journey, if the term may be used for so short a distance, bid fair to be accomplished in safety ; when, about three quarters of a league from Darnetal, Roger and his party were startled by a singular spectacle : an enormous waggon stood across the road ; near it by the side of a ditch, and lying on the ground, was a man apparently senseless ; whilst close by him were two individuals eagerly watching his prostrate form. Their attitude, at first sight, rendered it doubtful whether they were friends or foes.

Uncertainty, on this point, was of a short duration ; one of the strangers, addressing Roger in tones of deep emotion, said—“ If you are blessed with feelings of compassion towards your fellow-creatures, give me your assistance to relieve this

poor old man, who has fainted away from the fatigue and exhaustion of a long journey."

Roger de Beaumont, though a rude warrior, was by no means devoid of compassion, and he ordered his troop to halt. Moved by an instinct of the same nature, Margaret expressed a wish to dismount; and her guide, not unwilling to take part also in the adventure, sprang from his steed and assisted her to alight. She immediately proceeded to take a nearer view of the strangers. The oldest of them was lying on the ground, quite insensible; one of his companions was young and apparently endowed with great energy and vigour. Both, to judge from their dress, belonged to the class of wealthy burghers. The third was evidently the driver of the waggon.

The young man briefly informed the Sire de Beaumont that his name was Vital, and that he came from Flanders, where his father, the sufferer now requiring assistance, and himself were engaged in commerce; that, having occasion to come to Normandy, on matters connected with their business, they had been charged by Duke Baldwin with a message to his daughter, the Duchess Matilda. Being anxious to arrive as quickly as possible at Rouen, they had travelled with more speed than his aged father, already suffering from illness, could support, and he had fainted on the way.

It would indeed be an extraordinary event, in our day, to meet two messengers travelling in this

guise from a sovereign Prince to his daughter. But, at a period when neither post-office nor railway existed, communications between different countries were of rare occurrence, and the circumstance above related was by no means unusual. And what is equally characteristic of the times, Margaret, who had been carefully brought up in the convent of St. Préaux, knew as much of the art of surgery as became one of her rank, and never travelled without carrying with her drugs and ointments, and the necessary apparatus for dressing wounds. She, therefore, presented a phial to the young stranger; and, in a confident tone, desired him to make the old man smell at it, and it would instantly restore him to his senses. The stranger seized the phial, casting towards Margaret a look of the deepest gratitude. This she did not perceive, neither did she notice his handsome countenance, so completely was she absorbed in thinking of the poor old man's sufferings; and, to confess the truth, she was eager also to ascertain the effect of her hitherto unfailing remedy. No sooner had the sick man inhaled the contents of the phial, than he opened his eyes, and looked around him, as though seeking to account for the situation in which he found himself. Roger de Beaumont came forward, and explained to him that he had been taken suddenly ill on the road, and would probably have died on the spot, had it not been for the marvellous remedy of Mademoiselle d'Auscarise.

“D’Anscarise!” cried the old man; “merciful Heaven!” and, confused at the words which had escaped him, he immediately added—“Pardon, noble lady, if my feelings overcome me, and accept the thanks of a poor sufferer, whose rank in life is so far below yours, that he can offer nothing in return for your kindness—he can only pray to Heaven in your behalf.....”

There seemed more humility in his language and bearing than the occasion warranted; age and suffering in any rank are entitled to respect and attention; and, as the Sire de Beaumont did not quite understand the meaning of the old man’s address to Margaret, he abruptly terminated the expression of his gratitude, by offering to the strangers the protection of his escort to Rouen. The invalid was placed on horseback behind his son; and, to ensure his safety, it was thought advisable to fasten him to the rider with a strap or girdle.

The moment this measure was suggested, Margaret, as if mechanically, pulled off a small scarf, which she wore round her neck, and offered it for the purpose. The young Fleming, who was listening with apparent attention to the Sire de Beaumont, took the scarf, and, as if mechanically also, put it into his pocket. Seeing this Margaret was on the point of reclaiming her scarf; but, disconcerted at the sight of so many strangers, she drew back,

not thinking it worth while to create confusion, or excite observation for an object of so little value.

The cavalcade once more resumed its progress, and soon arrived at the gates of Rouen. The young Fleming and the Sire de Beaumont had a long and animated conversation together on the road. The former, no doubt, succeeded in gaining the good graces of a nobleman possessed of so much influence at the Court of Normandy; for, on arriving at the Ducal Palace, the waggon was carefully put under shelter, and the two merchants were committed to the care of Wadard, the head cook of the Palace, and, moreover, the affianced husband of Mabile.

"What! are *you* here?" exclaimed Wadard, on perceiving the furrier's daughter.

"Oh! yes, indeed," replied Mabile, in a melancholy tone; "I assisted Mademoiselle d'Anscarise, my foster-sister, to escape from her convent; and, in fact, I counted on your assistance to present her to my lord, the Duke; but it seems she has met with a better protector on the road. This has not prevented us, however, from being terribly frightened at Darnetal, and terribly shaken on a wretched horse, so that I am bruised from head to foot. However, I vow to you, this is the last time, as long as I live, that I shall ever meddle in the affairs of ladies of rank, were they my foster-sisters ten times over!"

Whilst poor Mabile was thus giving vent to her

complaints, the head cook assisted her to alight. We shall leave them together, though their conversation was soon interrupted, for Maître Wadard was obliged to bestow his attention on the travellers, and to provide them with suitable lodgings. As to Margaret, Roger de Beaumont appeared to think that her arrival was anxiously expected; for, without giving her time to inquire for her attendant, who, with the two strangers, had been carried off by Wadard, he introduced her into the presence of the Ducal Court.

CHAPTER V.

THE TAPESTRY GALLERY.

AVAILING ourselves of an author's privilege, we shall precede Margaret into the Tapestry Gallery, where sat the noble personages, whose favour and protection it was no less her interest than her ambition to obtain.

It was a spacious apartment, lighted with lofty arched windows; but, at this late hour of the day, the last rays of the setting sun had sunk beneath the horizon; and large torches, fixed in high, massive candlesticks standing on the ground, threw their glowing light upon the assembled party. On a raised dais, at one end of the gallery, sat the Duchess Matilda, and by her side were her daughter, the Princess Elgiva, and her niece, the Princess Judith. Below them, were numerous waiting women, who had taken advantage of the last glimpses of daylight to work with great dili-

gence at an immense piece of tapestry, which was stretched upon frames, extending the whole length of the room. From this circumstance, the apartment had acquired the name of the Tapestry Gallery.

At some little distance from his mother, sat young Robert, Matilda's favourite son. His eye fell with indifference upon the busy group of embroiderers; while, to the lively sallies of his cousin Judith, whose faded looks and haughty bearing formed a striking contrast to the open and agreeable countenance of the young prince, he scarcely vouchsafed a reply, save in monosyllables, and with an air of constraint.

Robert was dressed in a long robe which, after the fashion of the times, fell in folds to the ground; and this somewhat Oriental costume, worn by noblemen in their domestic circle, entirely concealed the defect which, at a later period, obtained for Robert the surname of Curthose.

At the moment we have chosen for introducing our readers into the presence of the Duchess, she was looking eagerly towards the door; whilst the Duke, on the contrary, who was seated on a low stool behind the Princesses, a position that partially concealed him from observation, affected an indifference, which was anything but habitual to him.

"My good uncle," said the Princess Judith, turning peevishly away from Robert, "say what

you please, this tapestry will never be anything more than the history of Harold the Saxon."

A faint blush overspread the pale, but lovely features of the Princess Elgiva.

"See," continued the Princess Judith, "almost all the linen cloth, which my aunt brought from Flanders, has been used, and yet no subject has been introduced, except in relation to these islanders."

"Well!" replied William sharply, "we will have the 'Saxon' picked out, and the history of my conquest put in his place."

At these words, the Princess Elgiva turned pale, and the Duchess hastened to say:

"We will have more cloth sent over from Flanders, and my Lord Duke shall have what he chooses embroidered upon it, without undoing this work, which has cost so much time and labour."

Poor Elgiva cast on her mother a look expressive of gratitude and sorrow. At this instant, the door was opened, and Margaret d'Anscarise entered, conducted by the Sire de Beaumont.

It would be difficult to judge of the impression which Margaret's appearance made on the Duchess; for Matilda, whose still handsome countenance was full of sweetness and dignity, scarcely allowed her secret thoughts to be reflected on its surface. Nevertheless, it might be presumed that Mademoiselle d'Anscarise's manner and address had removed some unfavourable impression from the mind of

the Duchess; for, regarding her with an air of satisfaction, she said :

“ Do not be alarmed, young maiden ; though I am rarely in the habit of taking an interest in novices who escape from their convent, my protection will not be denied you, if you are deserving of it, which I am inclined to believe.”

“ Madame,” replied Margaret, with emotion, and with a feeling of satisfaction which implied a conscience void of reproach, “ I will endeavour to merit this confidence, and if it be not required of me to break a vow made to my dying mother.....”

“ I know,” interrupted the Duchess, “ you were affianced by your parents, at an early age, to the son of my lord’s mortal enemy.”

Margaret hastened to repeat what she had before told the unknown cavalier in the forest, that she could not in justice be made to pay the penalty of political offences, which had occurred at so remote a period, and had but just concluded when her eyes fell upon the Duke, who had gradually risen to the full height of his tall figure. At this unexpected appearance, Margaret exclaimed—

“ Oh ! sir Knight, are you come at last ?” but she suddenly paused, on seeing the Duke’s splendid dress, and on noticing him familiarly put his large, rough hand on the delicate shoulder of the Duchess Matilda. “ Fool that I was !” cried she, “ not to have suspected this sooner, when my lord con-

descended to speak of his five daughters, who were about my own age.”²

“Yes, my child,” replied William, in the kind and dignified tone which he could so well adopt, when it suited his purpose. “When we met you in the forest, and heard that, rather than break a solemn vow, you had fled from your convent to seek our protection, we determined that it should not be sought in vain; and when we witnessed, moreover, your firm reliance on our justice, we vowed that it should not fail you. My intention,” continued he, turning to the Duchess, “was to introduce Mademoiselle d’Anscarise in the midst of us all, and to enjoy her surprise on discovering our rank and dignity; and, if it were agreeable to you, I purposed attaching her to the person of our daughter Elgiva. I thought that the example of a young person, so obedient to the will of her deceased parents, could scarcely fail of being useful to the Princess.”

“I see, my lord,” replied Matilda, “that I have much for which to apologise in having interfered with your good work;” then adding, in tones meant for the Duke alone, “Believe me, had I not been perfectly confident as to the result of this explanation, I should have taken care to make it less public.”

“Now, niece Judith,” said the duke, in the cold, harsh manner most habitual to him, “you overheard our conversation yesterday, and repeated it,

as it appears ; if this should happen again, I may not let it pass over so quietly as I have done to-day."

The Princess Judith bit her thin lips, while young Robert glanced exultingly at her.

William turned to an officer in waiting.

"Let the Flemish messenger, brought by the Sire de Beaumont, now enter." And, again addressing the Duchess, he said, "Of all the events which have taken place this day, the arrival of an envoy from Count Baldwin is certainly not the least important."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENLISTMENT.

It is well known in history, that as soon as William had resolved on the invasion of England, he lost no time in writing to his father-in-law to request his co-operation. Baldwin, struck with the gigantic nature of the expedition, answered in bantering terms, that before entering into any engagement, he wished to know what extent of land the future conqueror would bestow upon him.

Nettled at the tone of this refusal, William, in return, sent his father-in-law a sealed parchment, on the outside of which he traced the following words :—

“ Good sir, your share of English land shall be,
That which within this written scroll you see.”*

* “ Beau sire, en Angleterre aurez
Ce que dedans vous trouverez !”

The Count, thinking it was a deed of grant, eagerly opened the packet, and found nothing.

This pleasantry, which was quite in accordance with the taste of the period, was more deeply resented by the Duke of Flanders than could have been expected, considering that he had himself provoked it.

Under these circumstances, a message from Baldwin naturally excited expectation. As soon, therefore, as young Vital appeared, there was a general silence. With an ease and assurance unusual in one of his station in life, he walked up to the dais, where sat the Duke and Duchess, and placed in the hands of Matilda a document, to which was appended her father's seal.

"This epistle," said he, "contains words of affection, which the noble Baldwin is happy to have an opportunity of addressing to his beloved daughter; and I, Vital, his humble envoy, am commanded to tell the valiant Duke of Normandy that, at the moment of his embarkation, he will find at St. Valery six Flemish ships, duly equipped, which Count Baldwin places at his service."

Matilda, who could with difficulty refrain from tears, raised her eyes to heaven, with thankfulness and joy; for she lived in constant dread of the dissensions which were ever ready to break out among the various members of her family, whose violent tempers could with difficulty be controlled. As to

William, he frankly expressed his satisfaction at this unexpected message.

The young envoy did not think proper to inform him that, for this piece of good fortune, he was indebted solely to Matilda; for Count Baldwin was on the point of sending an angry reply, when Hugh de Grantemesnil reminded him of the grief it would cause his daughter, and he forbore.

"The Count, my master," continued Vital, "will be charmed, my lord, that you are so favourably disposed towards him, for he has a favour to beg in return—its object is an exile who deplores the opposition he was drawn into by evil counsellors, at the commencement of your reign. Your father's brother, my lord, is wasting away under the ravages of a disease, which skilful physicians pronounce beyond remedy, if, in his old age, he be not permitted to revisit his native land."

"*Par la splendeur de Dieu!*" cried William; "our respected father-in-law might have requested some other proof of our good will towards him. If the Count d'Arques had simply taken up arms against me, and subsequently returned to his allegiance, as others have done, I might perhaps have overlooked his defection. But he set no bounds to his insolence, and braved me in my own palace, where he came in disguise to sow dissensions among my household, and I swore, by all that was most sacred, that the bones of this audacious son of

Richard the Second should never rest in Norman ground."

"My lord," said the Flemish envoy, "the pacific nature of my embassy must be my apology; and, permit me to remind you that this attempt, which recoiled upon its author, had for its sole object your reconciliation. But, surprised in his sleep, the Count hastily drew his dagger, and slew the unfortunate man, by whom he thought himself betrayed. The fatal error, which still excites your indignation, is, to this day, to him a source of the deepest regret. But I will add no more," said the young messenger, noting with a quick eye the storm that was gathering on the brow of William, "though I should ill acquit myself of my commission, if I neglected to recall to your remembrance the claims which Henri d'Arques once possessed to the hand of the Count d'Anscarise's daughter."

"The claims of Henri d'Arqués, the faithful servant of the Genoese!" Claims, the advocacy of which he entrusts to the eloquence of an envoy!" cried William, with angry sarcasm.

"Henri d'Arques, my lord, in fighting on board a Genoese ship, hoped to obtain that knowledge and experience, which might one day be useful to his country. As to the remembrance which he desired to convey to Mademoiselle d'Anscarise, his enforced absence from his native land left him no alternative. But I have myself transgressed in

naming this illustrious lady in public, and I regret it the more, that I am already so deeply in her debt."

Saying these words, he advanced towards Margaret, who had listened with mingled curiosity and emotion to the concluding words of his discourse, and on his bended knee restored her scarf.

"What is this?" demanded the Duchess in astonishment.

"Madame," quickly replied Margaret, "on my way hither, under the protection of the Sire de Beaumont, our escort found this young man's father in a dying state on the road. An essence, which I had in my possession, restored him to his senses, and when it was thought necessary, for his safety on horseback, to secure him to the rider, I ventured to offer my scarf for the purpose; but the men-at-arms preferred a leathern girdle."

"And very properly too," observed William; "who ever dreamed of using a lady's scarf for securing on his horse a great burly Fleming!"

"I did," answered Margaret, simply; and, wishing to conciliate the Duke by falling into his humour, she continued—"and once in my childhood, when on board a ship, a violent storm arose, I ran to get my mother's scissors, that I might assist the sailors in cutting away the mast."

"Well done, fearless maiden!" cried William, laughing. "After this, we shall most certainly not give you up to any of the Count d'Arques' family. I release you from your vow; and when I

have conquered England, you shall choose a husband from among the bravest of my warriors."

A gentle sigh escaped the Princess Elgiva.

"My lord," replied Margaret, respectfully, yet firmly, "I can obey you by renouncing the husband destined for me by my parents, but I will never violate that solemn pledge which binds me—to bestow my hand on none other."

"That remains to be proved," said William, with an incredulous smile; then turning to the Flemish envoy, he said—"I understand that you are of humble birth, but you seem courageous and bold; lay aside your mission of ambassador, and come with me to England. If you fight as bravely as you speak, I will make a knight of you, and grant the first favour you may ask—a title, a castle, or a wife!"

"And if I demand both a wife and a castle?"

"*Par la splendeur de Dieu!* you shall have both; but on one condition, that if the recompense be double, the labour must be double too."

On saying these words, William rose, and, accompanied by the Duchess, and the other members of the Ducal family, quitted the Gallery.

"Thus it happened," says the writer of the manuscript from whence this account is taken, "that the envoy of the Duke of Flanders, the merchant Vital, became a companion-in-arms of the Duke of Normandy."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW PRINCE HAROLD BECAME THE SUBJECT OF
THE TAPESTRY.

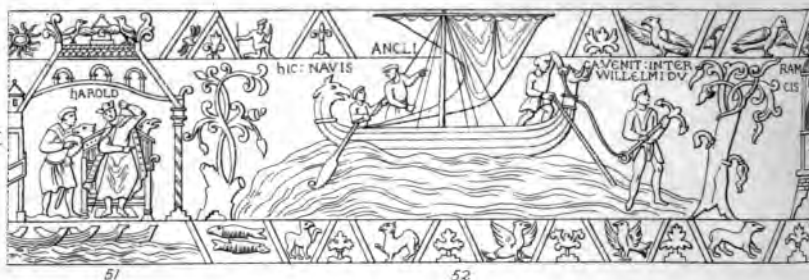
THE reader must now return with me to the Tapestry Gallery. To the glare of the torchlight had succeeded the pure and brilliant light of the sun, which, shining full upon the embroidery frames, brought out in glowing colours the strongly-contrasted tints of the worsteds, worked into various figures and designs upon the cloth.

Margaret, looking on with lively interest, stood near the Princess Elgiva.

"Let us sit down," said the Princess; "but before I begin to explain the subjects here represented, tell me, Margaret, have you ever heard of my ancestress, the Princess Emma?"

"The princess to whom the bards of this country have given the name of the 'Flower of Normandy?'"

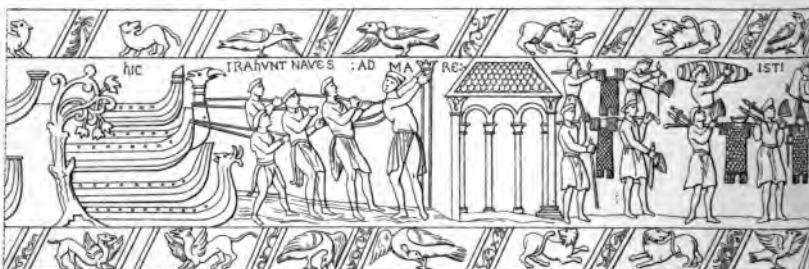
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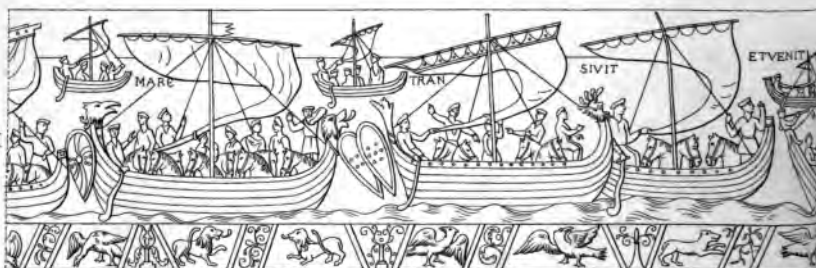
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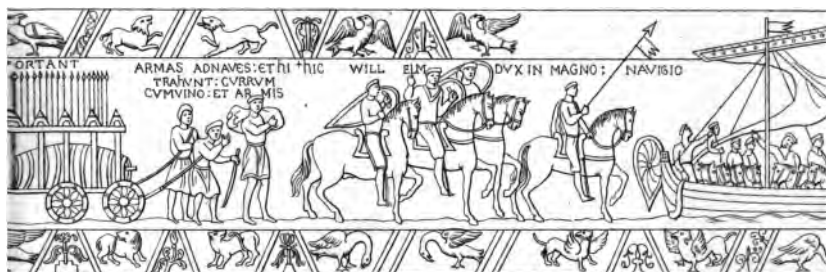


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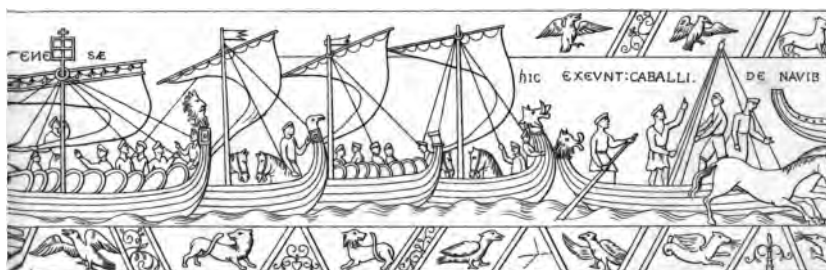
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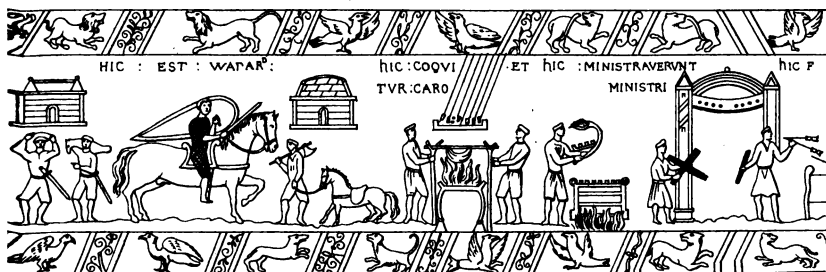
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Day & Son, Lith. to the

“The same! As you know something of her history, I will only recall to your mind, that she married Ethelbert, King of England, who, being driven by a terrible irruption of the Danes to abandon his kingdom, came with his sons, Edward and Alfred, to this country, and found refuge at the Court of Richard the Second, his brother-in-law. Hence arose the friendship shown to the Normans by Ethelbert, from the time he recovered his throne to the day of his death. As his son Alfred lost his life in the civil wars of his country, Edward inherited the crown, and following the example of his father, continued to shower his royal favours upon our countrymen. It happened, during his reign, that a disturbance took place in the town of Dover, between the Normans and the English, or Saxons, as they were more generally called, at that day; and several of the combatants, on both sides, were slain. When Edward heard of this, he flew into a violent passion, and sent for Earl Godwin, a powerful noble, in whose domains was situated the town of Dover. ‘Go!’ said he, ‘without a moment’s delay, and proclaim martial law among the rebels.’ Godwin observed that it would be unjust to exercise a blind vengeance upon the whole town—that the magistrates should be cited, in legal form, to appear before the judges, and there give an account of their conduct during the affray; and that thus it would be possible to distinguish between ‘the innocent and the guilty.

On hearing these words the whole weight of the king's wrath fell upon Godwin; and, excited by the Normans, from among whom he had chosen his counsellors, he passed a sentence of banishment against Godwin and his family. The people, by whom the Earl and his son Harold were greatly beloved, endeavoured to prevent this act of injustice, for they knew that if Godwin quitted England, they should be entirely at the mercy of those foreign adventurers who were ever the favourites of Edward. Their efforts, however, were useless: Earl Godwin and his children were sent into exile; their property was confiscated, and distributed among the Normans. It was under these circumstances," said Elgiva, drawing closer to Margaret, "that my father decided on going to England to visit King Edward, in fulfilment of a promise made to this prince, during his abode in Normandy. The Duke was struck with astonishment on seeing his countrymen, in a great degree, masters of the island. I believe," said the Princess, lowering her voice, "that, from that moment, my father conceived the idea of becoming King of England, in the place of Edward, who had no children, and whose health was failing."

"But," interrupted Margaret, "did not King Edward, by his will, make a grant of his kingdom to the Duke?"

The Princess shook her head.

"Alas! I know nothing of public affairs.

Nevertheless, I have often thought of a circumstance in connexion with this, which strengthens my suspicions. When the Duke returned from England, he showed us all the presents which King Edward had made him ; amongst these, were magnificent arms, horses and hounds ; golden cups of an oval form, beautifully chiselled, which the Duchess preserves amongst her choicest treasures ; but," added she, in so low a whisper that her words were scarcely audible, "the Duke never spoke of a will."

"So you believe....." cried Margaret, in a tone of indignation ; then suddenly interrupted herself on looking at the Princess.

"No, dear Margaret, I will believe nothing against my father's honour ; but I am very unhappy, and I know no one to whom I can confide my sorrow. The Duchess, my mother, is pious and noble-minded, and her whole happiness consists in sacrificing her wishes and pleasures to her duty. I am very far from possessing her strength of mind, and I wish I could meet with a friend who would sympathise in all my weaknesses and sorrows."

"But the Princesses, your sisters, and Madame Judith?" timidly inquired Margaret.

"Cecily, when quite young, was sent to a convent, and my other sisters have been separated from me intentionally, I suppose, for the Duke does not brook the slightest opposition to his will, and my grief is annoying to him, as conveying a

sort of reproach. As to the Princess Judith, she never liked anybody ; and, if she seemed at one time to look with an eye of favour upon my brother Robert, it was because another person was then present at Court, to whom she knew this open display of preference would give pain."

There was a momentary silence. Elgiva, apparently overcome with fatigue, was leaning on the arm of her chair, and pressing her forehead with her hands.

Margaret dared not raise her eyes towards her, but seeing a tear fall on the Princess's dress, she endeavoured to divert her mind from the painful remembrances with which she seemed oppressed.

"Therefore, madame," observed Margaret, "all this tapestry....."

"Oh ! do not call me madame," said the Princess, interrupting her. "Pray, choose some endearing name by which to address me, at least when we are alone. You have won my confidence and regard, Margaret, and if you cannot return the warmth of my feeling, I entreat you, at least, to grant me your sympathy."

By an irresistible impulse, Margaret threw her arms round Elgiva, and held her for a moment in a close embrace. Then she drew back in alarm, her lovely face suffused with blushes.

"Do not blush and tremble, Margaret, you know not the good you have done me by this affectionate caress. But I must return to my history, lest we

should be interrupted. I told you, I believe, that Earl Godwin had retired into Flanders. The oppressed and persecuted Saxons soon sent messengers to entreat him to return, and put himself at their head. Edward and his courtiers, apprehensive of the result, offered terms to Godwin, which were readily accepted. Hostages were exchanged : both the King and the Earl swore ‘God’s peace and friendship’ for one another ; and Godwin, under the terms of the compact, gave up his younger son, and Ulnoth, one of his grandsons. But scarcely were the hostages delivered into Edward’s hands, than, for greater security, he sent them here, and committed them to the custody of the Duke. Meanwhile, Harold had returned to England, and, forgetful of the past, had rendered most important services to the King, by repelling the ferocious Welshmen who infested his borders, and by preventing the intended rebellion of his Saxon subjects. Edward, touched by such magnanimous conduct, after his ill-treatment of Harold’s family, acknowledged him publicly as his successor, to the great joy of his people, and the dissatisfaction of his favourites. Harold was not of a disposition to enjoy his happiness alone. His first thought, on seeing the brilliant prospects which opened before him, was to free his nephew Ulnoth, who was detained at my father’s court—the other hostage had died of grief, soon after his arrival in

a foreign land. Now, I can tell you the rest when explaining the designs of the tapestry."

The young Princess rose, and Margaret followed her. When they came to the frame placed at the entrance of the gallery, Elgiva fixed her eyes on the group which represented Harold on the point of embarking for Normandy, and stood before the picture, lost in silent contemplation; her own recollections, no doubt, completing the deficiencies of the rude sketch.

It must, however, be confessed, that at the present day, when art and science have multiplied objects of comparison a hundred fold, so that even the most ignorant constitute themselves judges of works of art—it is easy to criticise these early attempts. But the very perfection to which art has risen in our days, by giving less scope to the imagination, has, perhaps, in an equal degree, blunted the sense of enjoyment; at least, we may be pardoned the inference, on seeing that the imperfect figure of Harold, frequently repeated in the work, recalled so vividly to Elgiva's remembrance a cherished image; whilst the rude work itself excited in Margaret the most unbounded admiration.

"What I cannot understand," said Margaret, when the Princess, a little recovered from her emotion, explained the first group, "is, how a design of this kind should have ever occurred to your mind."

“The honour is due to the Duchess, my mother, not to me. When Prince Harold was here, he often spoke of the industrious habits of the Saxon ladies, who were always occupied at home in embroidering pieces of tapestry, with which they ornamented the churches and monasteries. He dwelt on the beautiful tapestry hung up in the chapel of Croyland, wherein is represented the siege of a town, which the enemy could only get possession of by introducing into it a wooden horse, the body of which was filled with armed men. Harold, when a child, had taken great pleasure in watching the embroidery of his sister, the beautiful Edith, wife of King Edward. He could, therefore, sufficiently explain to us how the work was done. It happened that the Duchess had brought over numerous pieces of cloth from Flanders, and she had them carefully mounted on a frame, by skilful workmen. Prince Harold, at his own request, was made the subject of the tapestry. He was then in great favour with both my parents, particularly with the Duchess, who so greatly admired his nobleness of mind, his valour, and his open and confiding disposition, that she constantly held him up as an example to the Princes, my brothers. My uncle Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who is very fond of rare and curious objects, made us promise that the work, when completed, should one day adorn the walls of the cathedral, which was then being restored and beautified, by his orders.”

“But here is something which I cannot understand,” observed Margaret. “There, as you have told me, is Prince Harold, treacherously made prisoner by the Count de Ponthieu, at the moment of his landing in Normandy, and there is my lord Duke, who delivers him.....”

“Oh! it was nobly done,” interrupted Elgiva, with a glow of delight, as if happy in the thought of being able to render this justice to her father.

“Again, you say the Duke carried the Prince home with him,” continued Margaret; “but here comes a messenger to apprise the Duke of the attempt of the Count de Ponthieu; it appears to me that this circumstance should have been placed before that of his deliverance.”

“You are right in one sense, Margaret, but this circumstance had been forgotten at first; when it was subsequently thought of, it could not be placed otherwise than it is, and this was certainly better than not putting it in at all.”

“Undoubtedly,” replied Margaret, who had no objection to offer to so judicious an observation.

“I should like also to know why these animals, in various attitudes, have been worked round as a sort of ornamental border?”⁴

“While the Duchess was still in Flanders, a monk, eager to give her pleasure, copied some of the finest pages of a valuable manuscript, belonging to my grandfather, Count Baldwin. In this book are represented every species of animals, and they



are made to act and speak like human beings. It appears that the author (Esop) invented this mode of criticising the faults of the great, who would not otherwise have allowed him to give utterance to the truths he laid before them. The Bishop of Bayeux was greatly pleased with the work, and it was he who requested that the principal pictures should be represented in the tapestry. Once at liberty," pursued Elgiva, "Harold was, by my father's orders, brought in to see us. We then met for the first time, Margaret. The Prince's countenance was flushed with indignation, but this speedily changed into an expression of gratitude towards my father, and, shall I confess it? the liveliest admiration was visible in his countenance, whenever he turned his eyes towards me. These varied emotions succeeded each other rapidly, as he became animated in conversation. His face was handsome—his light hair, parted in the centre, fell in long, broken curls round his head, and blended with his unshaven beard, whilst on his upper lip he wore a small moustache. This singular mode of wearing the beard and hair was unknown in Normandy; but it harmonized with the Prince's features, and gave an air of manliness to a countenance which might otherwise have been deemed too feminine, in the beauty and sweetness of its expression. I was standing near the Duchess when Harold entered, and I cannot describe my feelings on seeing him. It might have been compassion for

the ill-treatment he had experienced, but I could with difficulty conceal my emotion, and, had I been alone, I should have shed tears."

The young Princess was silent, overcome by painful recollections.

"You have not been portrayed as present at this interview," observed Margaret, pointing to the design.

"It was done by the direction of the Duchess, but I have no doubt she was influenced in this by my cousin Judith. In Harold's suite was a pious Saxon noble, named Waltheof, who sought the hand of the Princess. She, therefore, persuaded the Duchess not to allow ladies to be represented, in order that she might not appear in connexion with Waltheof, whom she detested. Moreover, they were desirous of hurrying on to the scene of my betrothal with Harold," added Elgiva, with a sigh. "Here I am, Margaret, and that is the clerk who drew up the contract. I was made to swear to espouse Prince Harold. We exchanged rings; and now that our vows are registered in heaven, I am commanded to break my faith, and to look upon Harold only as my father's enemy. It is impossible, dear Margaret, I cannot do it! I shall die before this change can be wrought in my feelings!"

"Alas! alas!" said Margaret; "but let me intreat you to be composed; and, unless the subject is too fraught with painful recollections, pray

tell me what caused the estrangement between the Duke and Prince Harold."

"At first, the greatest friendship subsisted between them—each day was devoted to pleasure; and jousts, hunting parties, and festivals followed one another in rapid succession." The Princess lingered with melancholy pleasure on this happy period of her life; which had been described to Margaret at Darnetal, as the reader will remember. The exploits of Harold were next passed in review, and commented upon by the Princess. First, his magnanimous conduct towards William's troops, whom he saved from certain death, by rescuing them from their perilous situation amid the quicksands of Couesnon; then, the capitulation of Dinan, which was due to his courage alone; the honour of knighthood bestowed upon him by William, in reward of his services; and, finally, his presentation to the Bishop of Bayeux, on his return from the memorable war in Brittany. "What follows," continued the Princess, "becomes more and more painful to relate. You will recollect that I told you of the great favour the Normans enjoyed at the Court of King Edward. The Duke, knowing how much they were disliked by the English, spoke to Prince Harold of the evils which would befall them, at the death of the Saxon King, if Godwin's party gained the ascendant, for Harold had not concealed his intentions from my father."

"But was not this very imprudent?"

“Harold could not have the least suspicion of the projects which were formed against himself and his future kingdom. Seeing the Duke firmly established on the throne of this beautiful country, the conquest of his ancestors, he was firmly persuaded that my father was content with the power that he already enjoyed, and the state and splendour by which he was surrounded. Who, indeed, would have supposed that England, torn with internal dissensions, and ever on the verge of civil war, could be an object of envy to him? With me, in truth, it was very different: the simplicity of the Saxon manners and customs harmonized closely with my naturally timid disposition. I loved to hear Harold speak of the life of usefulness led by the women of his country, which merited, no less than it gained them, the esteem and respect of their countrymen—tributes of far greater value than the empty compliments bestowed on the ladies of Normandy. When a Saxon has a favour to ask, he applies to the Queen, who, in the assemblies of the nation, or Parliament,^s as it is termed, holds the same rank as the King, and no question of importance is decided without her approval. Ladies who possess property in their own right have a seat in these assemblies. Women of the humbler classes are not employed, as in other countries, in those laborious occupations for which nature has justly destined the greater strength of man, and

their parents are obliged, by law, to leave them entire liberty in their choice of a husband."

The Princess uttered these last words in tones of deep melancholy; it was evident that her mind was busied with painful recollections of the past. After a few minutes' silence, she said—

"When I promised my beloved Harold to share the throne with him, he, on his side, entered into an engagement with the Duke to confirm the rights of those Normans who held possessions in England; and, above all, to protect them from the vengeance of his party. One day, after a lengthened discussion on these subjects, my father, Harold, and the principal officers of the Court, were seated round a table covered with a cloth of gold, when the Duke suddenly exclaimed—'Harold, I require you to confirm, by a solemn oath, in the presence of that noble assembly, the engagement you have made to aid me in my projects with regard to England, and to espouse my daughter Elgiva.' These last words left no doubt in the Prince's mind that the pledge referred to what had already been agreed upon, and he took the oath dictated by the Duke, without the slightest suspicion, upon which the whole assembly cried out, 'So help him God!' The cloth that covered the supposed table was removed, and the unfortunate Prince beheld a great quantity of holy relics, which had been placed there by the Duke. Harold shuddered, not doubting that some stratagem had been practised upon him. My father,

in a firm voice, announced his intention to obtain the crown of England for himself, and reminded Harold that, by his oath, he was bound to assist him in that attempt."

"Notwithstanding," said Margaret, yielding to an instinct of natural justice, "God knew of the Prince's intention to promise only what had been openly agreed upon."

"Such was my interpretation of the words, no less than Harold's; but my uncle the Bishop, who is so pious and learned, said, 'That it could not be,' as Harold had sworn upon the holy relics to aid the Duke in his plans, whatever they might be, he was bound to observe his oath.

"'Elgiva,' said Harold to me, on the evening of that fatal day, 'if I were only compelled to renounce the title of king, notwithstanding the happiness I promised myself, when the moment should come for you to share the throne with me, I should not regret it, for I could be happy, sustained by your affection, in the retirement of private life. But I have compromised the best interests of my country, by my blind and foolish confidence;' and he abandoned himself to grief and despair."

The Princess could not continue her recital, but sat some time in painful silence.

Margaret was anxious to lead the Princess's thoughts to a more cheering topic, and was herself so deeply interested in the subject, that she involuntarily returned to it, by observing—

“I see the Duke, and the Prince before him ; but what is the meaning of this kind of altar?”

“Alas !” replied Elgiva, “my kind mother felt that the transaction did not place the Duke’s character in a favourable light, and she put in two shrines containing relics, to show that Harold took the oath with a full consciousness of the deed he had sworn to accomplish. The Princess Judith and her women finished this design, or rather this misrepresentation ; I would not put in a stitch to so false a picture. What follows, is Harold’s arrival in England, where he felt very unhappy, without one ray of hope to cheer him. His love for me, thoughts for the welfare of his country, and his fatal oath produced a most painful conflict in his mind—and I, Margaret.....I cannot tell you all I suffered, and all I suffer still !”

In saying these words, Elgiva hid her face in her hands, and sobbed violently, while the convulsive trembling of her limbs caused her companion to exclaim in the greatest alarm—

“For heaven’s sake, madame, I implore you, be composed !”

“You are right, Margaret ; I must not be surprised shedding tears ; my father might hear of it, and it would irritate him still more—while my uncle Odo tells me that with gentleness and patience, the Duke might be brought to agree to some treaty, of which one of the conditions would be my marriage. To confess the truth, even this last

hope has left me, but I will try to conquer this emotion."

Then, with a vivacity quite unusual in her, she walked towards the picture which represented the coronation of Harold, and sat down to continue the work. This portion of the design, as it portrayed the Saxon hero decked with the ensigns of royalty, had, through a feeling of delicate sympathy, been left entirely to the Princess to complete. Love for the English nation had induced Harold to take the decisive step of being crowned at the death of King Edward, and this made him for ever the enemy of his future father-in-law. Nevertheless, the scene possessed a singular attraction for the Princess Elgiva. Brought up in extreme fear of her father, she, perhaps, could not help feeling that the Prince who thus set him at defiance, was worthy of admiration, so she worked at this curious picture with a kind of feverish ardour to which she was usually a stranger. The needle passed so rapidly through the cloth, that it was difficult to conceive how a succession of stitches, necessary to trace the pattern, could be formed. All her faculties were so absorbed by the rapidity with which she worked, that her mind could not admit another thought.

Margaret stood watching her progress with painful interest. She was herself blessed with great energy, supported by an excellent constitution, and her trials had taught her to appreciate the strength of mind which, in Elgiva, triumphed

over physical weakness. This comparison insensibly directed her mind to thoughts of her early years, which had been passed in obscurity and great privations. Her marriage with the Count d'Arques had always struck her as the only means by which she could regain her former rank. But in the presence of so deep and devoted a passion as Elgiva's, she could not but ask herself if her betrothal in infancy would ever lead to a reciprocity of affection, such as had been so touchingly described to her. Besides, had not the redoubtable Duke of Normandy, who was at this time master of her destiny, interdicted all hope of this union? Then the sacred promise of her parents, and her own vow to her dying mother, all forbid her to turn her thoughts towards another—even admitting that the stranger Vital united to a handsome person, and an excellent disposition, the advantages of noble birth. Having once entered upon this hazardous train of thought, it is impossible to say how far Margaret might have proceeded in her reflections, had not the door been hastily thrown open, and the Duchess appeared, accompanied by her niece Judith, and her maids.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COURT OF FLANDERS.

ON entering the Gallery, the Duchess looked anxiously towards her daughter. Elgiva had risen, but after curtsying respectfully to her mother, she reseated herself, and bending over her work, had carefully concealed her features from the spectators.

“What are you looking at, my child?” demanded the Duchess of Margaret.

“I am wondering, madame, at the arrangement of these designs. Here is the funeral of King Edward—then follows his death. This latter event ought evidently to have preceded the funeral.”

“You are right, Margaret; but the messenger who brought us the news of the King’s death, had heard it only from the people present at the funeral, and the work was immediately commenced from his account of the ceremony. When, at a later period, the Sire de Bois-Rose gave us better information,

and full particulars of the King's last moments, the involuntary omission was repaired. But do you not feel a desire to work as we do, Margaret?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure; but if I were to do wrong?"

"Oh! do not be afraid. Among the numbers of young maidens, who are now working so well, there were many less intelligent than you appear to be, who have nevertheless succeeded. These black outlines are traced by me, or by the Princess Judith, and beginners fill them up in the manner you see, with wools of different colours. The needle is passed through the cloth, then drawn out at a little distance, then put through again, and so on, until the whole grounding is done. Try, Margaret. Oh! I see you are doing it perfectly. I knew you would not find it difficult."

"But these outlines, madame, which are so beautifully done as to resemble little 'chains, my stitch does not form the same pattern."

"Oh! that is added afterwards, and I will teach you how to do it, when you have had a little more practice."

"May I ask, madame, the meaning of a kind of star in the distance, which seems to have a long tail?"

The Princess Judith hastened to reply.

"That is a comet; and learned astrologers, who have studied futurity, say, that this tail forms a rod, and that it is intended to be put into the hands

of the stranger destined to conquer England, to beat the English with."

"You are unkind, Judith," said the Duchess, in a tone of severity.

At this moment Roger de Beaumont entered, followed by Vital.

"Here is our messenger, gracious lady," said Roger, with a respectful obeisance. "I must take my leave, for my duty calls me to attend a council convened by the Duke, to decide the question of the Regency, which he intends to establish during the period of his expedition to England. It is needless to say how many hearts unite in the prayer, that this charge may be entrusted to their beloved Duchess, if she will accept the burden."

"Do not call it a *burden*, call it an *honour*," replied Matilda; "but our good brother, Monseigneur Odo, has far better claims to the title than I can pretend to."

"I am little versed in the affairs of state, madame, yet I share in the opinion of prudent men, who rely more on your wisdom and goodness, to maintain peace in the Duke's dominions, than on the learning of the reverend Prelate. Besides, Bishop Odo would scarcely be satisfied to remain inactive, when others were led on to glory and to conquest."

Saying these words, Roger de Beaumont again bowed to the Duchess, and retired.

"Young man," said the Duchess, addressing

Vital, "I have requested your presence in order to obtain from you more ample information concerning my dear father, and my valued friends at the Court of Flanders, than can be gathered from letters, however long and affectionate these may be."

"I await your orders, madame," replied Vital, reluctantly withdrawing his eyes from Margaret, whom he had been contemplating with unbounded admiration, for which breach of etiquette her uncommon beauty certainly offered some justification.

To escape from his penetrating gaze, Margaret turned toward Elgiva, under pretence of asking for some wool.

"Oh! pray let him look at you, Margaret, and let me have the delight of seeing him love you, as Harold loved me."

Notwithstanding the affection and interest with which the betrothed of the Saxon Prince had inspired her, Margaret's pride was roused, and the blood of the d'Anscarise boiled in her veins at this extraordinary speech. Allow herself to be loved by this audacious vassal! and turning towards him with a look of proud disdain, she hoped to make him retire within the bounds of humility and respect becoming one of his inferior rank; but, on suddenly meeting her glance, his eyes filled with an expression of tenderness and delight, her's fell at once beneath his impassioned gaze.

It was at this moment that Matilda had interrupted Vital.

"Therefore," continued the Duchess, "my kind father, through affection for me, has overlooked the Duke's pleasantries."

"Count Baldwin resented them at first, but Hugh de Grantmesnil said—'My lord, the children of the Duchess of Normandy are your grandsons; and all that is acquired by the Duke will one day be, in some measure, your own, as it will belong to your descendants.'⁶ Struck by the truth of this remark, the Count, after a few minutes' consideration, entrusted me with the message I have brought."

The Duchess, at this, could with difficulty conceal her agitation.

Since Matilda's departure from her native land, Baldwin de Mons, her brother, for whom she entertained the warmest affection, notwithstanding his imperious temper, had become attached to Richilda, the haughty Countess of Hainault, and widow of Hartmann de Saxe, who, it was reported, had not been happy in his marriage with her. Baldwin, fancying himself more likely to gain her affections, or perhaps carried away by his passion, caused an offer of his hand to be made to her, but the haughty Countess rejected it with disdain. Baldwin de Mons then placed himself at the head of a considerable army, invested Hainault, and laid siege to Richilda in her capital. When the town

had for some time been suffering from famine, Baldwin proposed to the Countess to choose between the alternative of dying of hunger, or marrying him. She chose the latter, justly considering that, although she might die of grief by marrying Baldwin, that event was, in all probability, more remote than the other. However, nothing of the kind happened, and the marriage was said to be as happy as many which are formed under more auspicious circumstances. The Duchess was, at all times, most anxious to gather some new particulars relating to this singular union; but, accustomed to great circumspection in all her actions, she turned towards the young Princesses, and said—

“Elgiva and Judith, you may retire. I wish you to visit the father of this good young man; it will be useful to you to make some observations on his malady, which is said to be of a singular nature.”

“My kind aunt,” replied the Princess Judith, “I prefer remaining here. I have only a few stitches to put in to finish the picture of the Saxon Prince, who is in the act of listening anxiously to the news brought him from Normandy.”

“As you think proper,” said the Duchess, evidently annoyed, but preferring to put some restraint upon her curiosity, rather than be exposed to the ill-natured remarks of her niece, if she persisted, after what had passed between the Duke and her

father, in giving a private audience to the young Fleming.

We shall now follow Elgiva, and if any of our readers are desirous of ascertaining the precise degree of conjugal happiness enjoyed by Baldwin de Mons, we take the liberty of referring them to the *Chronicles of Flanders*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELIQUARY.

THE Castle of Rouen, at this period, consisted of three parts: the inner court, the outer court, and the keep, or castle. This last was built on an eminence to which access was gained by a flight of stone steps, and was the habitation of the ducal family, and their immediate attendants. The extensive piece of ground which surrounded it, was called the inner court. A battlemented wall divided this from the outer court, which was of immense extent, and was protected by parapets, loop-holes, moats, and the other means of defence then in vogue. The officers' dwellings were erected under the wall which divided the two courts, and those allotted to guests and pilgrims were close to the outer fortifications.

The distance from the Castle to the dwelling of

the guests was great for the Princess Elgiva, in her enfeebled state ; but her step was so buoyant, that Margaret could not help noticing it.

"It is because I have an object in view, Margaret," said the Princess. "The young Flemish messenger has inspired me with a degree of confidence that I have never felt in any of my father's followers. For some time past it has been my most anxious desire to send to Harold the reliquary which was given to me by the Pope's legate, and I reckon upon Vital to serve me in this, the dearest wish of my heart."

Instead of replying, Margaret turned with an air of impatience towards one of her companions, and inquired if she knew in what traffic these Flemish merchants were engaged.

"In the traffic of cloth," was the reply—"but Maitre Wadard, who put their waggon under shelter, peeped through a crevice in the side, and saw that it was full of earth. This perplexed him very much, and he judged it right to inform the Sire de Beaumont of his discovery. But when he made his report, Sir Roger flew into a violent passion, called poor Wadard a meddling, inquisitive fool, and told him, if he valued his life, not to utter a word of this matter. So Wadard told no one but Mabile ; and Mabile has taken care only to mention it to Gertrude and me, who have both promised faithfully not to open our mouths on the subject."

"And you have faithfully kept your promise!" observed Margaret, with a smile.

"Oh! we have nothing to fear, and I know that you would not expose poor Wadard to the anger of the Sire de Beaumont."

The party soon arrived at the entrance of a small tower; and a narrow staircase conducted them to the apartment occupied by Vital's father. The invalid was seated near an open window, and was watching with such deep interest some Norman soldiers, who were wrestling in the outer court, that he did not perceive the entrance of the Princess and her attendants. "Well done!" murmured he with delight—"what inconceivable dexterity!"—

Here Margaret came forward, and said—"Will you permit me, my good friend, to close the window?" for the cold breeze had already made the Princess Elgiva turn pale.

The old merchant bowed slightly. One of the Princess's attendants then announced the titles of the illustrious visitors. An expression of joy animated the worn features of the stranger, and there was an easy courtesy in his manner, which betokened equality rather than inferiority in rank.

"Really," thought Margaret, "the conceit and audacity of these Flemish traders exceed all bounds. This man receives a princess, and the daughter of a count, with no more ceremony than he would show to mere burghers' wives."

The invalid appeared to have guessed her thoughts, for he said: "I hope, madame, you will pardon my apparent want of respect; the name of D'Anscarise has awakened many interesting recollections, for I have often heard it pronounced in Flanders, by the Count d'Arques."

"Oh! the nobleman who is soliciting his pardon," interrupted a privileged attendant, eager to take part in the conversation.

"His pardon!" exclaimed the old man—"Well! words are of little consequence, if pardon expresses a reconciliation between the nephew and the uncle—but William has again refused it."

"The Duke, my father," urged Elgiva, "has had so much to suffer from these frequent rebellions!"

"No doubt! but, alas! he will some day discover how greatly age and experience tend to dispel the enthusiastic dreams of youth. The Count, it is to be presumed, feels remorse for so much blood shed in a hopeless cause; he, we may reasonably conjecture, yearns for the kind sympathy of friends in his old age; while he sees his son driven forth to be a wanderer through unknown lands, in the service of a foreign prince; all these considerations induce him, no doubt, to make another effort towards obtaining what, it appears, William calls his pardon."

"It would ill become us, my honoured father, to blame the conduct of a prince whose hospitality we are receiving, and who has admitted me into the

ranks of his victorious armies," interrupted Vital, who had just entered, and who bowed to the Princess and Margaret with the most profound respect.

"Vital," said the Princess, "I feel assured that it is neither the thirst for blood, nor the love of riches which induces you to join this expedition for the invasion of England, but the praiseworthy motive of gaining renown, that you may aspire to the affections of her, whom, in your heart, you have already chosen. I am informed, by my uncle Odo, that as soon as the Norman army lands in England, negotiations will commence, and you will have an opportunity of approaching the King. Vital, it is my wish to intrust you with this reliquary—promise that you will deliver it into the hands of King Harold—and that you will tell him from me, that be the issue of this impious war what it may, I will keep my plighted faith to him inviolate until death."

Vital bent his knee on receiving the precious reliquary, and replied in tones of deep emotion: "Be assured, madame, that the King shall receive this sacred pledge of your affection, unless, indeed, he renders himself unworthy of it."

"Which can never be, my good Vital—and now, let me hear if, in return for this service, I can, by any means in my power, promote your happiness."

"May I hope, madame, that you will not think me ungrateful if I say that I would be indebted to my own unaided efforts, no less for my happiness,

than for my renown. But your gracious offer will not be thrown away, if you will extend your kindness to my father, during my absence, and condescend to visit him sometimes, as you have done to-day, and give him such news of the army as must reach you with promptitude and certainty."

The Princess gave the promise with so much feeling, that Margaret, scarcely knowing why, felt a malicious desire to damp the evident delight of the two merchants.

"Is there not reason to fear," said Margaret, "that the noble Duchess?"

"Oh!" hastily interrupted Elgiva, "my mother grants me full liberty to act as I think proper, in any matter which may bring me some little consolation."

"The daughter of the Count d'Anscarise," said the young Fleming, in a slightly sarcastic tone, "thinks, no doubt, that to take an interest in obscure merchants is derogatory to her high birth."

"The daughter of the Count d'Anscarise," retorted Margaret, with impetuosity, "takes an interest in whom she thinks proper."

With these words, she advanced towards the door; but being obliged to draw back, in order to allow the Princess to precede her, she found herself side by side with Vital, who whispered to her: "The obscure merchant will so conduct himself, that the daughter of the Count d'Anscarise will not be able to refuse him her esteem."

“ Insolent vassal !” thought Margaret, turning from him with haughty indignation. “ My esteem, forsooth ! by the memory of my noble father, I vow not even to bestow a thought upon him !”

The resolution was laudable no doubt : but, as it not unfrequently happens that the best of resolutions, when pushed to an extreme, produces the opposite results ; so Margaret displayed such constancy in repeating her reasons for not thinking of Vital, that insensibly the remembrance of him formed part of her daily occupation.

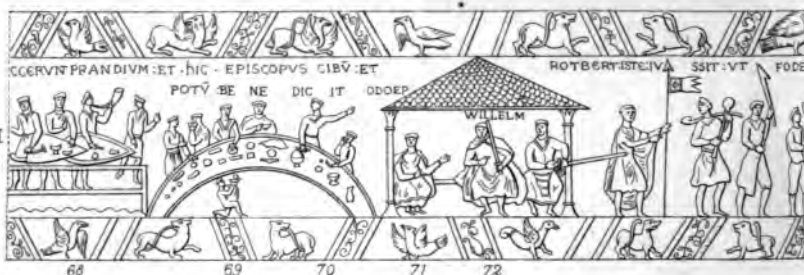
CHAPTER X.

THE REGENT.

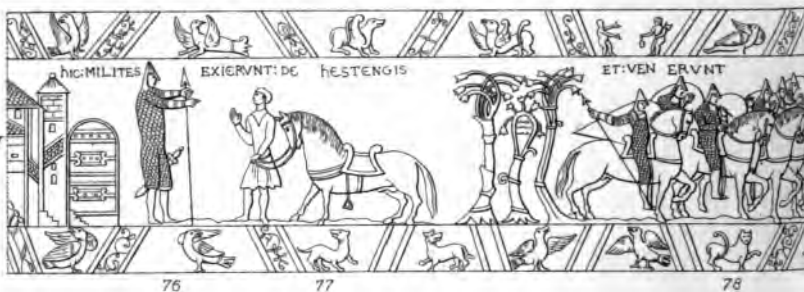
THE rude and barbarous manners of the Normans began to acquire a certain polish, in the eleventh century, when a chivalrous gallantry prevailed throughout Europe. It was probably owing to the influence of these ideas, that Matilda was indebted for the enthusiasm displayed by persons of all ranks when, after the council held at Bonneville-sur-Toques, she was proclaimed Regent. "Everything contributed to make this choice agreeable to the people," observes an old author, well acquainted with contemporaneous opinions ; "for the Princess was handsome, wise, and accomplished, well-informed in state affairs, and generally beloved."

But before Matilda was called upon to exercise her newly-acquired authority, her husband, the Duke of Normandy, found himself under the necessity of employing seductive powers, of a totally dif-

XIII



XIV

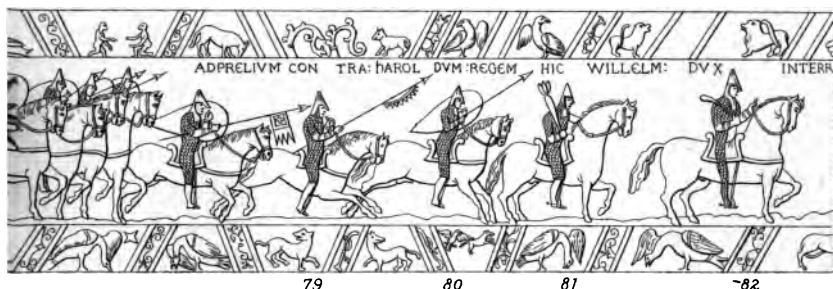


XV



XVI





ferent nature, to ensure the success of his favourite project. Already had the preparations for his expedition absorbed immense sums; and his brothers, and the barons most attached to his cause, had pledged their estates to obtain money. In this extremity, the Bishop of Bayeux proposed to convene an assembly of the principal inhabitants of Rouen. History has recorded his words:—"Raison est qui paie l'écot, soit appelé à y consentir." (He who pays the reckoning should share the feast.)

"A parliament composed of all ranks of people was then convoked," says the Chronicle of Normandy. "The notables feared, by granting subsidies, to establish a precedent, of which advantage might be taken on some future occasion. 'We are bound,' said they, 'to assist the Duke to defend his territory, but we are not bound to follow him beyond the seas.'"

William made no reply, but adjourned the assembly. In the interval, he made good use of his time, by gaining over to his interests the most influential members of each party. To the clergy, he displayed the standard which he had received from the hands of the Pope, together with a ring containing a single hair of St. Peter. He then described to them, in glowing terms, the immense riches possessed by the Saxon clergy, and which it was his intention, he said, after the conquest, to bestow on the Norman priesthood. To the burghers, he promised that the supplies now granted should

be recognised by letters patent as a voluntary gift, and not compulsory on the people for the future. To the deputies, he offered the grant of additional franchises for the municipalities of the various towns they represented. In short, he succeeded so completely in gaining the suffrages of all parties, that, when the assembly met, supplies, even more considerable than he had demanded, were voted by acclamation.⁷

The preparations for the expedition were now carried on with the greatest activity. The docks were crowded with vessels, in course of construction, the churches were filled with all ranks of the faithful, singing joyful hymns. On every side rang the sound of the anvil, and everywhere groups of armed men might be seen practising the arts of war, in anticipation of the coming fight. The council of state held frequent conferences, strangers flocked to the various inns, where they could with difficulty obtain accommodation, while the streets were obstructed by itinerant traders, who, at this auspicious moment, were eagerly endeavouring to dispose of their wares. In short, the town presented a scene of the greatest animation; and joy, bustle, and excitement everywhere prevailed.

In the midst of this universal tumult, the Duchess alone preserved an appearance of tranquillity. Rising early, according to the custom of the age, she devoted part of the morning in acquiring a knowledge of state affairs, the burden of

which, in the Duke's absence, was so soon to devolve upon her. At nine o'clock, the ducal family assembled for dinner. The Duchess presided at the meal, which was carefully prepared, according to the minute directions given to Maître Wadard, by Matilda herself, on the previous evening. Great care was taken by the Duchess, that dishes should be provided to suit the taste of each individual member of the family; and to this task was added the more painful one of endeavouring to maintain feelings of good will between her hot-headed children and their father. Already had the seeds of dissension sprung up between William and his son Robert, by which Matilda's life was embittered, and indeed actually shortened, if we may credit the assertion of some historians.

In the afternoon, Matilda repaired to the Tapestry Gallery. There, in the midst of her waiting-women and young maidens of all classes, she superintended her favourite work. Sometimes, by words of kindness, she encouraged the industrious maids, and not unfrequently she would recite tales and legends, to beguile the tedious hours of labour, often prolonged at her desire, so anxious was she for the completion of the tapestry. And whoever might have seen the Duchess thus employed, would have little suspected the weight of care and sorrow with which her mind was oppressed.

She was occupied in tracing the picture of the

embarkation of the Norman troops, in the order in which it was to take place, at the mouth of the river Dives, when the Princess Judith suddenly interrupting her work, said—

“Kind aunt, if we are to credit the news in circulation within the palace this morning, we shall have another picture to add to our ‘embroidered history.’”

“And what is this great event of which, since the arrival of the last messenger, my lord Duke has not thought fit to inform me?”

“Probably my uncle preferred reserving to himself the right of informing the person most concerned in the occurrence,” replied the Princess Judith, looking fixedly at her cousin Elgiva, and adding, “report says that King Harold is just married to the daughter of the Saxon Count Morcar.”

Elgiva replied by an incredulous smile. Her lovely, ingenuous countenance retained its usual tranquil expression, and she continued her work in silence. But, if the shaft aimed by Judith had fallen powerless against the unbounded faith of the Princess in her betrothed, it struck, with painful force, the maternal heart of Matilda, who knew too well how little private feelings are taken into account, when affairs of state are in question.

“Margaret,” said the Duchess, “you may retire with the Princess Elgiva;” then turning to the latter, she added, “the Duke will soon be here,

and as you have been indisposed this morning, it would vex him to see your altered looks."

Elgiva took her mother's hand, and kissing it respectfully, said—

"Oh ! madame, how can I thank you for this kindness?"

On retiring, she cast on her cousin Judith an expressive look, in which were mingled contempt for the accusation brought against her betrothed, and forgiveness for the pain she had tried to inflict upon her.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE ARMY.

THE time fixed for the departure of the expedition had arrived, and William's numerous army prepared to leave Rouen, amidst the tears and regrets of the whole population. From the inmates of the ducal palace to the occupants of the most humble dwelling, each household had some loss to mourn—the separation from a husband, a brother, or a betrothed, who swelled the ranks of the future conqueror of England.

Margaret, that same morning, had been obliged to employ the whole force of her eloquence in sustaining the courage of poor Mabile, who, in addition to her grief at parting with Maître Wadard, had the mortification of seeing him so engrossed with the duties of his position as purveyor to the army (to which office he had been appointed by the Duke), that he replied to her affectionate farewell,

by enumerating the heads of oxen, sheep, and calves, besides other animals, equally useful, but of a less noble nature, which had been taken on board the ships by his orders.

In spite of her anger, Mabile followed the ladies and attendants of the ducal court to see the immense army defile on its march towards the mouth of the river Dives. Margaret alone remained with the Princess Elgiva, who was so feeble and worn, that she was lying on a couch, in a state bordering on stupor. In order to give the invalid more air, the door of the room had been left open ; but to prevent the Princess being disturbed by the noise in the street, Margaret proceeded to close the outer door, and open the inner one, which communicated with the gallery. While thus engaged, Vital suddenly appeared at the further end of the gallery, which was opposite to her. To retreat was impossible, as it would have been highly improper to allow the "insolent" Fleming to penetrate into the Princess's apartment ; Margaret, therefore, resolutely advanced to meet him.

Coldness and displeasure were visible in Made-moiselle d'Anscarise's manner, at which Vital appeared neither astonished nor offended.

"Pardon my intrusion, madame," said he, "I have vainly sought some one to whom I could safely confide this precious reliquary, and ensure its return to the Princess ; and, as time presses, I am obliged to deliver it myself."

"For heaven's sake, speak lower—but why return this sacred relic?"

"Why! Are you not aware, madame, that King Harold is married?"

"I have heard it, and the Princess also; but we neither of us believe it."

The interest which Margaret felt in the unfortunate Princess, caused her to forget her assumed coldness, and her voice and manner became insensibly softened, while her countenance wore a most touching expression of melancholy. On hearing her so confidently assert her disbelief, Vital felt that for her to commit such a breach of faith would be impossible, and he contemplated her with rapturous delight. Margaret felt embarrassed; but at length continued: "You must fulfil your promise. I know the Princess well—and I feel assured that when she is made acquainted with the painful truth, she will desire that this sacred token of her love should be considered a pledge also of her forgiveness."

"Noble and generous interpreter of her thoughts!" cried Vital, with enthusiasm—then, as if fearful of betraying himself by adding another word, he bowed to Margaret, and abruptly quitted the gallery.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONQUEST.

THE Duchess, desirous of effecting a reconciliation between Margaret and her relative, conducted her to the convent of St. Préaux, where Matilda was received by the whole assembly of nuns with all the honour and respect due to her exalted rank, and her known piety.

Matilda presented to the abbess a rich carpet embroidered with silk and gold beads, to adorn the convent chapel; and made an offering on the altar of three marks of gold; she also condescended to inquire into the minutest details regarding the comfort of the nuns, and ordered that the refectory should be enlarged and repaired at her own expense—and, on leaving, she implored, on behalf of herself and her companion, the prayers of the pious sisterhood.

The Princess Elgiva did not accompany the Duchess on this occasion. From the moment her cousin Judith had revealed the inconstancy of her betrothed, all around her had avoided pronouncing, in her presence, the name of Harold—and the Princess herself had not made the slightest allusion to the subject.

But whether her disbelief of the report had gradually yielded to a conviction of its truth, or whether her malady had made greater progress, certain it is, that since the day on which she had learnt the marriage of the Saxon King, she had scarcely risen from her couch.

In the meantime, news was brought that William's fleet, after having been detained by unfavourable winds in the port of St. Valery, had at length put out to sea, on the 22nd of September, 1066; and, meeting with propitious weather, had arrived safely off a small village, called Pevensey, near Hastings. Guided by a description furnished by an eye-witness of the scene, Matilda began eagerly to pourtray it in the Tapestry—for she well knew the great value set upon her embroidery by the Duke, the Bishop of Bayeux, and the greater part of their companions-in-arms, who looked upon its completion as an omen of their future success. This picture, so complicated in its design, and yet so simple in its details, is well known. The army is landing, and, in the distance, is seen the fleet at anchor. Pioneers, armourers, carpenters, and

smiths, are transporting to the shore, piece by piece, the wooden castles, and arms of various kinds, necessary for the double purpose of attack and defence.

The Duke was the last to land. History relates that when his feet touched the sand, he made a false step, and fell to the ground. A murmur arose among the soldiers, who cried out, "This is a bad omen!"

"What troubles you?" exclaimed William, rising with great composure; "I have taken seisin of this land with my hands, and, *par la splendeur de Dieu!* so far as it extends, it is mine—it is yours!"

Sometimes a little incident of local interest was depicted by the experienced Duchess to break the monotony of the more serious subjects which her attendants were called upon to complete. It was thus that Mabile was enabled to gaze with intense delight on the well known figure of Maître Wadard, who was introduced superintending the numerous body of cooks, whom he had taken the precaution to provide among his suite. Ovens were in the act of being heated, and chickens being put on the spit — while flames were seen issuing from beneath the cauldrons—in short, nothing had been omitted in this chef-d'œuvre of primitive art, and the gratified Mabile was never tired of contemplating the picture.

Soon the glorious news arrived of the taking of Dover, and of the noble conduct of Vital, who, at the

moment his companions set fire to the town, saved the old men, women, and children, at the peril of his life. It also became known that, at Vital's request, William had indemnified the inhabitants for their losses, and granted them the necessary sums for rebuilding their dwellings. Matilda was careful not to omit this trait, but through a little selfish feeling of conjugal tenderness, she represented the burning of the town, and the deliverance of the unfortunate inhabitants, without naming Vital in the inscription, so that the merit of this noble and generous action might be attributed wholly to the Duke. Desirous, however, of repairing this injustice, she afterwards devoted a whole section to the young cavalier, of whom fame recorded another action, not less courageous, nor less glorious.

Having been sent forward to reconnoitre, Vital fell into an ambuscade, and driven to despair at the thought of the danger to which the Norman army was exposed, he fought with so much valour, that his numerous assailants fell beneath the vigour of his arm. Though severely wounded, he set off at full gallop, and spurring into the Norman camp, gave the alarm.

"Margaret, my child," said the Duchess, "you will fill up this design."

"As you think proper, madame," replied Margaret; "but if I were allowed to choose, I should prefer the cooking scene, which is so amusing,"

"No, no, Margaret, you do not speak the truth;

you would not be a d'Anscarise if courage and humanity did not touch your heart."

Margaret coloured—she felt she was wrong. It would have been natural enough for her to have shown an interest in the fortunes of the brave Vital. Her indifference, on the contrary, excited surprise, and gave rise to whisperings.

Matilda continued, still addressing Margaret—

"You will go with Gertrude and Mary to see Vital's father; you must inform the good old man of the brave conduct of his son, and you must see that the invalid is well cared for."

The Duchess was little aware that since the departure of the young Fleming, Margaret went every day to see his aged father. In truth, the Princess Elgiva had promised to make these visits; but her illness had compelled her to neglect her promise, and Margaret probably thought herself bound in honour to take the place of the Princess. The strictest fulfilment of this duty, however, scarcely required that she should sit for hours with the invalid, and nurse him with an almost filial affection, as Margaret was in the habit of doing every day. Had Mademoiselle d'Anscarise been closely questioned on the subject, she would probably have been much embarrassed to give reasons for the anxious care she was devoting to the Flemish merchant. But in justice to Margaret, it must be confessed that the gloom of the ducal palace increasing from day to day, rendered some little

diversion necessary, and this she sought in her frequent visits to the tower. The Princess was now so ill, that she remained the greater part of the day shut up in her own room, or at her devotions in the oratory, while the Duchess seemed overwhelmed with the cares of state. One morning, six weeks after the departure of the army, Margaret was alone in the Tapestry Gallery, occupied with the task allotted to her by the Duchess, and which, after the little incident we have already related, she had not thought proper again to decline. Deeply absorbed in thought, she had failed to notice the entrance of a stranger; when, requiring some trifle for her work, she turned round, and beheld Vital. Margaret started with astonishment, and immediately threw a large packet of wool over that portion of the tapestry upon which she was employed, but in her hurry she failed to cover the whole of the design, and about one-third of it, with more than half of the inscription: *Hic Willelm; dux interrogat Vital si.....* remained visible. Margaret, however, had reason to believe that the young envoy had seen nothing of this, for saluting her with an air of profound respect, he informed her, that, being desirous of seeing the Duchess, for whom he brought important news, he had been conducted to the chapel of the Benedictine Priory, near St. Sèvres, where the noble lady was at prayers. There, notwithstanding the sacredness of the spot, he had exclaimed—

"William has triumphed! he is conqueror of England, madame, and King Harold is dead!"

"Dead! good heavens!" ejaculated Margaret.

Vital continued.

"'Holy mother of God!' cried the Duchess; 'in memory of these joyful tidings, I will raise to you a magnificent church on this spot, and it shall be called Notre-Dame-de-Bonnes-Nouvelles.'"

"I am astonished," observed Margaret, that the Duchess should give vent to such transports of joy, and style an event '*good news*,' which to her daughter will be a source of the deepest grief."

"The Duchess doubtless thinks it less painful for the Princess to mourn a lover's death than a lover's infidelity," answered Vital; but, as Matilda at this moment entered the Gallery, followed by a numerous suite, the conversation was interrupted.

Encouraged by a sign from the Duchess, the young cavalier commenced his narrative as follows:—

"About the time my lord Duke was landing at Pevensey, a considerable body of Norwegians had advanced to attack the Saxons at York, where a sanguinary battle was fought, in which the Norwegian King lost his life, and his army was cut to pieces. But the victory was dearly bought by the Saxons, who lost a great number of men, while Harold himself was severely wounded. Notwithstanding his wounds he gathered round him all among his countrymen who were able to bear arms,

and prepared to give battle to the Norman host. Nobly did he merit the titles bestowed upon him — the grateful Saxons, of ‘the brave, the powerful, the destroyer of foreign tyranny, and the elect of the people.’ It is recorded of him that, when advised to lay waste the country in order to starve out the enemy, ‘By the faith of my fathers,’ he exclaimed, ‘I will never destroy the territory I am bound to defend!’ Nevertheless, Harold’s courage amounted to rashness, for we have gathered from the captives that his brother Gurth urged him not to meet the enemy, saying—‘It is useless to deny that by fair or foul means you have been made to take a solemn oath on the bodies of saints; why then risk your life with the sin of perjury upon your soul? Let *us* fight, we have taken no oath—war is our right—let us give the Normans battle without you. If we give way, you will advance to our assistance; if we die, you will avenge us.’”

At this moment, hearing a sound of moaning in the Gallery, the Duchess and Margaret looked round, but could not discern the cause. A crowd surrounded them anxious to hear Vital, who continued—

“King Harold, refusing to follow the prudent advice of his counsellors, impetuously attacked the Normans, without waiting for the promised reinforcements from his distant provinces. On the morning of this memorable day, the 14th of October, my Lord Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, celebrated

mass, putting his priestly robes over his armour for the ceremony, after which he mounted his charger, and ranged the army in order of battle."

A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, and the narrator proceeded—

"As to my lord Duke, he wore round his neck some of the relics upon which Harold had taken the fatal oath. Before him marched a soldier bearing aloft the unfurled banner, which had been blessed by our Holy Father, the Pope. The valiant Taillefer, the warrior minstrel, pushed forward on his charger, at the head of the chivalry, and sung the song of Roland. At the end of each stanza, he threw his lance into the air with one hand, and caught it with the other as it fell, while the soldiers sang in chorus, 'God is our help! God is our help!' The signal was given. King Harold, conspicuous in the front rank of the enemy, pressed vehemently on, and for awhile we feared for the result, for the tide of war was against us, and our army was losing ground. In the first shock of battle my lord the Duke had disappeared, and the panic-struck soldiers exclaimed that he was dead; when, in another moment, he was seen with his bared head rising from a ditch, into which he had fallen with a troop of his cavaliers. 'I still live,' cried he, 'and, by the grace of God, I will conquer the Saxons!'

"Having rallied his men, and put on another helmet, he feigned to retreat with his knights, to

whom he had communicated his design. The stratagem succeeded. The enemy, seeing him fly, dashed onwards in pursuit, thus breaking their ranks which they had, till then, with so much effort maintained. Suddenly, the Duke and his party wheeled round, while another body of the Normans attacked the Saxons in the rear. Harold vainly attempted to take refuge within his intrenchments, the Normans broke through his defences, and the combat was resumed with even greater fury than before. It lasted till the evening ; and not until the Duke had had his horse killed under him, was the royal standard of the Saxons torn down, and the sacred banner of Rome waving in its place. The Saxon army was utterly routed. These brave warriors, backed by the no less unflinching courage of the inhabitants of every grade, having done for their country all that lay in the power of man to do, were at length driven to fly for their lives. King Harold and his brothers were found dead beneath their banner."

William's envoy had scarcely uttered these words, when a piercing shriek was heard. The crowd gave way, and the Princess Elgiva was discovered lying senseless on the floor.

It appears that Elgiva, attracted by the bustle in the Gallery, had entered by a side door, and stood there during Vital's recital, concealed by a group of listeners who were too much engaged to notice her.

On discovering the sad catastrophe which had befallen their beloved Princess, the crowd immediately dispersed, and Elgiva was carried to her apartment, where, on recovering her senses, she asked for Vital. By the orders of the Duchess, he was immediately introduced, and approaching Elgiva's couch, he silently placed within reach of her hand the sacred reliquary, with which she had entrusted him.

Tears started to Elgiva's eyes, but suppressing them, she said in a firm voice—"Has the Duke permitted King Harold to be interred as becomes a good Christian, and a valiant king?"

"Madame," replied Vital, in tones of deep emotion, "I was enabled to assemble several of the Saxon clergy, who, with those who carried the remains of the noble Harold, asked my lord Duke to allow the last office to be performed according to the usages of the Saxons, and my lord willingly consented. An abbé spread his cloak upon the ground, the Saxon hero was laid upon it, and then carried to the grave, which was on the summit of the hill (facing the sea) where the King had so gloriously fallen. 'In life, he defended the coast,' said the Duke; 'in death let him guard it still.'"*

Then Elgiva, pointing to the reliquary, said: "Did he receive it?"

Vital cast down his eyes—"I understand you,"

* "Il gardait la côte, qu'il la garde encore."

she continued, "the violence of the war, and its speedy termination....."

Elgiva was here interrupted by the Princess Judith, who inquired if the Duke had fulfilled the brilliant promises made to his followers?

"So well, madame," replied Vital, "that our soldiers say among themselves, that the Norman cattle-drivers will become the founders of many a noble family in England. Hugh, the tailor, has been made a knight; a considerable fief falls to the share of Maître Wadard, the head cook; Jaques, the waggoner, is now a baron—while Flambard, the valet, has taken orders, and is already a bishop. The Sire Guilbert alone has refused a rich county, saying: 'That in accompanying the Duke, he did but perform his duty—that he wanted not the riches of another'—and would accept no share of the spoil."

"And you, doubtless, followed the Sire Guilbert's example?" sarcastically observed the Princess Judith.

Vital cast a sorrowful look towards the Princess Elgiva, who was reclining on her couch, with the Duchess's hand in hers: "Madame," said he, "in reward for my services my lord Duke has entrusted me with a painful mission, which I know not how to accomplish."

"If the Duke's orders relate to me," said Elgiva, "speak fearlessly, my good Vital—the most painful hour of my life is past."

"My lord desires me to say," pursued the young man, not daring to raise his eyes to those of the Princess, "that he has pledged your hand to King Sancho, the Strong, and I am commanded to conduct you to Spain."

"I will go, Vital, and my mother must not weep for me ; my only desire in this world now, is to please my father, who, because of my deep sorrow, parted from me in anger." Elgiva was silent for a few minutes, absorbed in thought, then added : "This union, at which my heart revolts, will never take place. I have prayed to the Almighty not to permit me to be conducted to Spain, but rather to take me to Himself—and my prayers have been heard, for I feel that I shall die on the voyage."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHY QUEEN MATILDA DISCONTINUED THE
TAPESTRY.

ELGIVA appeared resigned, and in truth she felt so; for, after the anguish of suspense, the certainty of every greater evil produces comparative tranquillity and repose. The Princess had requested to see her nurse, Dame Ansberge; and the faithful creature hastened at the summons to the ducal palace. But, on seeing the change which had taken place in her beloved foster-daughter, she was alarmed, and gave way to tears and lamentations. When the attendants tried to silence her, Elgiva desired them to let her give vent to the feelings of her oppressed and affectionate heart—adding, that she was aware of her own danger, and that Dame Ansberge's grief did not increase it.

In the meantime, the Bishop of Bayeux informed

the Duchess that she must lose no time in completing her embroidery, for William's coronation was appointed to take place at the end of December, and the Conqueror desired that on the day of the important ceremony, this memorial of his achievements, and of the patience and affection of his beloved Duchess, should adorn the Cathedral of Westminster.

The work was, therefore, continued with increased energy ; and the description of the battle of Hastings drew near its completion. In this picture Harold was represented lying dead on the battle-field, while a Norman soldier, with a battle-axe in his hand, was on the point of striking the inanimate body. Justly incensed at this wanton act of barbarity, William had degraded the soldier. This fact was suppressed by Vital, when constrained to continue his narrative in the presence of the Princess Elgiva, but it was eagerly seized upon by the Duchess, who lost no opportunity of recording any incident which tended to raise the character of William. Dreading, however, the impression which the sight of the picture might produce on her unfortunate daughter, she gave orders that, under every possible pretence, Elgiva should be kept away from the Gallery. For some time it had been easy enough to obey these orders, for the Princess seldom left her room. One morning, however, Margaret was as much surprised as grieved to see Elgiva direct her steps towards the Tapestry Gallery.

As soon as the Duchess saw her daughter, she advanced to meet her, and prevent her entrance.

"Suffer me, madame," said the Princess, in a tone of sad entreaty, "suffer me for this, perhaps the last time. Have I not given sufficient proofs of fortitude and courage? Remember that my lot is cast for ever (though Heaven knows I neither hope nor wish that it should be otherwise), and I shall see the dear home of my childhood no more."

The afflicted Duchess could insist no longer; but with increasing anxiety followed the Princess, who, leaning on Margaret's arm, stood before the pictures gazing with earnest intensity upon them, as though eager in this last look to impress upon her memory the minutest traits of each.

It was evident, however, that the invalid's strength was unequal to the task she had undertaken. She became more and more feeble and agitated, and the Duchess again entreated her to retire. Elgiva firmly, but respectfully, declined, and at length reached the last design. By Matilda's orders this had been covered over; but, moved by a fatal instinct, the Princess withdrew the veil, and beheld the Saxon Chief, decked with the ensigns of his rank, lying dead upon the field, and the Norman soldier with uplifted arm about to strike the fallen hero. A deadly paleness overspread the features of Elgiva, and she was seized with a violent fit of coughing. On removing the

handkerchief, which she held to her lips, the Duchess saw, with indescribable grief, that it was stained with blood.

"My daughter—oh, my daughter!" cried Matilda, taking the Princess in her arms—"my beloved child! What have I done? I am the cause of her death!" Distracted with grief, the Duchess seized the frame which contained the picture of Harold's tragical end, and attempted to destroy it. "Elgiva! my daughter," said she, in tones of the deepest anguish, "that memorial of my pride, and it may be of your death, shall never be completed." Then turning to her attendants, she impetuously added, "Detach it from the frames, instantly, I command you; let so painful an object be removed from the Princess's sight for ever."⁸

Deeply moved at this scene, the attendants hastened to obey the orders of the Duchess, and in a few seconds the "*long embroidered history*"⁹ disappeared from its massive frames.

"Believe me, madame," said the Princess, who had become tranquil on beholding her mother's grief, "I shall not easily forget this proof of tenderness and affection. If I dared express a wish, it would be that the unfinished tapestry might be given to my uncle, the Bishop of Bayeux, to hang round the walls of his cathedral. I have worked at it under Harold's own eye, and it would be agony, indeed, to think of its being blazoned as a trophy in

his own country, the defence of which cost him his life."

The Duchess, melting into tears, promised faithfully to fulfil all her beloved daughter's wishes.

In consequence of the boisterous season of the year (it was the month of November, 1066), Matilda was desirous of postponing the departure of Elgiva until the spring of the following year, but the Princess would not consent to it. "The orders of the Duke are peremptory," said she, "and it is my duty to obey them."

Elgiva was no less remarkable for the consistency which governed all her actions, than for her piety and resignation, which formed, indeed, the distinguishing features of her character. Thus, on beholding the rich wardrobe, which, in her maternal solicitude, the Duchess had ordered to be provided for her use, she said, "Why prepare such gorgeous apparel, when a simple shroud would have sufficed!"

The noble ladies De Montgomery, De Bois-Rose, and De Grantmesnil, offered to accompany the future Queen of Castile to Spain, but she declined their services, and consented to take with her none but Margaret and her faithful nurse, Dame Ansberge. There was a touching truth in her words on this occasion: "I do not require," she said, "a numerous suite to witness my last hours; I ask

but Margaret's devotion to watch over me, and close my eyes."

Mademoiselle D'Anscarise had intended taking her foster-sister, Mabile, as her attendant, but before an opportunity occurred for making the proposal, she found that Mabile was completely engrossed with the preparations for her wedding, which was shortly to take place. Maître Wadard, being now possessed of considerable property, purposed taking his bride to England, where she expected to play the part of a great lady.

"Who would have thought," said she, in her transports of delight, "that Maître Wadard would so soon return to fetch me; when, on bidding me farewell, his head was so full of his cattle, that he spoke of nothing else, and did not even look at me!"

Margaret could scarcely help smiling, little as her thoughts were in harmony with such a scene; and, to add to her distress of mind, the Duchess sent to desire her presence, after the breaking up of the council at which she was then presiding. A few words spoken by Matilda, on the preceding evening, had given Margaret a clue to the subject of the proposed interview.

Remorse, mingling with Matilda's grief, had increased its bitterness, and the incident in the Tapestry Gallery, by revealing the strength of Elgiva's attachment to Harold, made the Duchess

regret that she had not condemned in stronger terms his faithless conduct to the Princess. And now that her daughter was about to contract another engagement, was it not a mother's duty—so the Duchess reasoned—to dwell upon her lover's perfidy, in the hope that Elgiva would cease to deplore the loss of one so plainly unworthy of her affection—and that thus, indifferent to the past, she might live to enjoy that happiness which Providence in merciful atonement for the sufferings she had undergone had already placed within her reach? Frequently had Matilda formed the resolution of entering upon this delicate subject with the young Princess; but dreading to produce a too painful, though it might be a salutary impression on her, in her enfeebled state, she had as often abandoned her design—and, at length, came to the determination of having recourse to Margaret's assistance; for Margaret's naturally firm and tranquil disposition exercised a decided influence on all around her.

“For heaven's sake, madame!” she exclaimed, when the Duchess had revealed her intentions, “let the Princess preserve her illusions, if she has any. Thoughts are of little importance when duty governs our actions.”

“Thoughts are of the greatest importance, my child,” returned Matilda, gravely, “for when they are too long and too deeply cherished, they prevail over duty at last.”

Margaret coloured—but the Duchess was too much occupied with her own reflections to heed the confusion of her companion. We shall learn the result of this interview on a future occasion.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ THE STAR OF THE SEAS.”

A FEW days afterwards a considerable crowd assembled to view “ The Star of the Seas,” a magnificent vessel which, under the command of Vital, had been appointed to convey the Princess Elgiva to Spain. During the passage of his fleet to England, William had an opportunity of testing Vital’s nautical skill, which he perceived was in no way inferior to that of the Norman pilots. As a recompense for his valour, the Duke had created him a knight on the battle-field of Hastings ; and, being convinced of his merit and abilities, he now made choice of him to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Spain. For William was anxious to procure for his new subjects, advantages similar to those which Canute the First had obtained for them, by establishing commercial relations with the southern countries of Europe.

“The Star of the Seas” was justly acknowledged to be unrivalled throughout William’s fleet. Matilda had caused it to be built, and magnificently fitted up, under her own eye and at her own expense, and had presented it as a tribute of affection to her beloved husband, when he set sail from Normandy for the invasion of England. She was, therefore, peculiarly grateful to the Duke for making choice of it on this important occasion, anxious as she was to ensure the comfort and safety of her beloved daughter. On visiting the vessel the day previous to its departure, the Duchess saw, with pain and regret, that it was encumbered with the spoils of the vanquished Saxons, by the orders of the Conqueror, who wished, no doubt, to dazzle the eyes of his future son-in-law, Sancho the Strong, by a display of his wealth. Huge mirrors, and lofty candelabra, five feet in height, alike wrought of massive silver, goblets and vases of the purest gold, and chairs and couches of the rarest wood, inlaid with ivory, and of exquisite workmanship, all bore testimony no less to the practised skill, than to the refined taste of the Saxon craftsmen. Matilda, after carefully setting apart the presents intended for the Court of Spain, ordered all the rest of the trophies to be removed from the vessel. The rich furniture, selected for the use of Elgiva and her companions, was exchanged for some of Norman fashion, unpretending in ornament, and simple in design, but more in keeping with Elgiva’s taste.

"The Princess will have time enough to become reconciled to other habits and customs," said the Duchess, to justify this departure from the Duke's orders ; "let her, at least, look as long as possible on the dear familiar objects of her native land."

"I had thought of this, madame," said Vital ; and the rapidity with which the change had been effected, proved that he only awaited Matilda's commands to carry out his purpose.

The next day, "The Star of the Seas," was seen spreading its white sails to the breeze, in readiness to leave the port of Rouen, and on the deck stood Vital, carefully superintending the preparations for departure. A superb barge was in waiting to convey the Princess and her suite on board. At length she appeared, leaning on the arm of the Duchess, and enveloped in a cloak, fastened to the collar of her dress, of the fashion in vogue among the ladies of the period. Elgiva was pale and feeble, but her lovely countenance wore an expression of calm and peaceful resignation. She cast a sorrowful glance around her, as if to take a last farewell of her beloved country ; but the beauties of the scenery were at that moment obscured from view by a thick fog, which chilled the atmosphere, and threw an additional gloom over the parting hour. At the moment of stepping into the barge, Elgiva's courage seemed to fail her. It was but a passing weakness, for she instantly repressed it, and turning to the Duchess, said : "My mother, let me thank you once more

for this last proof of your regard ; if I have, at any time, been wanting in affection, or if I have failed in any duty towards you, I entreat your forgiveness." She then named the Duke, her father, and each of her brothers and sisters, lamenting that she should see them no more. The Duchess, overcome with emotion, was unable to reply ; she silently put her hands on her daughter's head, and crossing them as if in prayer, raised her eyes to heaven. The Princess caught her meaning, and fervently exclaimed, " Yes, my mother, there we shall meet again." She then turned hurriedly away, and was advancing towards the barge, when, observing the Princess Judith, who, with her usual coldness and indifference, stood looking on, she paused, held out her hand, and embraced her.

The Duchess was, with great difficulty, led by her attendants to a chapel in the neighbourhood.

" Unfortunate lady ! Unhappy mother !" was repeated by various groups of women, who stood on the quay, whither they had been attracted by curiosity.

" Say rather, unfortunate young Princess," cried the rude voice of a sailor ; " for what can be more unfortunate than to embark on the boisterous ocean at this inclement season ?"

" The Duchess is indeed very sorry to part with the Princess," replied one of the women ; " but our Duke, who is soon to be crowned King of Eng-

land, is in haste that his daughter should become Queen of Spain."

"To say nothing of the King of Spain's message," said a worthy burgher, with a knowing laugh. "He has given notice, that if the Princess be not immediately sent to Spain, he will cause the gates of all the towns belonging to him to be closed, and then farewell to our pilgrimages to St. Jacques de Compostella, which would assuredly be a great misfortune, for no saint in Paradise ever performed so many miracles as St. Jacques."

"The Star of the Seas" was getting under weigh, when the venerable bishop, Guy d'Amiens, appeared on the deck to bestow his benediction on the passengers and sailors, according to the usual custom, at the moment of departure.

The sailors, on his approach, immediately placed themselves in ranks, and during this ceremony Margaret was separated from the Princess, and compelled to retire behind a heap of sails and rigging. On the opposite side were two individuals, whom, by the sound of their voices, Margaret at once recognized as Sir Roger de Beaumont, and the elder Vital.

"You are committing a great folly," said the knight to the invalid.

"Well! if there is danger, I prefer sharing it with my son."

"But there was no danger in remaining behind."

"That may be; but life in the ducal palace had become a burden to me." Then the old man added, in a tone of pleasantry which Margaret was wholly unable to understand—"You will watch over my deposit remember, I count upon you, on the faith of a knight."

Sir Roger burst out laughing. "Oh, the famous waggon! before I am a day older it shall be safely locked up in the sepulchral vault of my ancestors!"

Margaret heard no more, for she was called upon to attend the Princess. She descended into Elgiva's room, where the Princess had retired with Dame Ansberge, and the party were soon joined by the Bishop.

"My child," said he to the Princess, in a tone of paternal authority, "your noble mother has commanded me to remind you, in this trying hour, that you will soon have important duties to fulfil, and that you can only do so by banishing from your thoughts the remembrance of the past. The Prince to whom you were betrothed, having formed other ties....."

"Let the dead rest in peace, my lord Bishop," interposed the Princess, gravely; "and pray tell my dear mother that I entreat her to be under no trouble or anxiety on my behalf. The Almighty has granted my prayers, and my duties for the future will not be difficult to fulfil."

When the prelate had retired, the Princess said to Margaret—"I did not at first believe in Harold's

inconstancy, but it was not long before a conviction of the whole truth forced itself upon me. Nevertheless, I dared not openly acknowledge it, lest Harold should be blamed in my presence; for though my own heart reproached him, I could not patiently endure the accusations of others."

While Elgiva thus poured out her secret thoughts to her devoted companion, the vessel gained the open sea, cleaving the opposing waves, as though obedient to the voice of Vital, who, acting in the double capacity of commander and pilot of the ship, was ever on the deck watching over the safety of his precious charge.

Brought up among the Genoese, an industrious people, who from the earliest ages had been famed for their skill in navigation and commerce, it was not surprising that the young Fleming should possess all the knowledge and ability necessary for the post he filled. But despite his talents and his zeal, the voyage was fraught with peril, nor could anything avail to disperse the gloom and depression caused by the illness of the Princess. Surprised by a hurricane in the Bay of Biscay, the frail bark was threatened with destruction; even weather-beaten mariners shuddered at the roaring of the mighty sea, and gave themselves up for lost. Tossed upon mountainous waves, with dark clouds hovering overhead, and a yawning abyss opening its wide gulf beneath, death seemed inevitable. But when Vital, who in these moments of danger

never left the helm, by dexterous management and superhuman exertions had averted the catastrophe, "The Star of the Seas" rose from its watery bed and, buoyant as a seabird, floated in comparative safety upon the crest of the foaming billows. Yet death still hovered round them, ever on the watch for some ungarded moment of the wakeful mariner, in which to dart upon his prey.

It was not, however, the terrible abyss below, nor the howling storm above, that was destined to furnish a victim for the cold grasp of death, but a consuming grief, the most implacable of human scourges. Elgiva, whose gradual decline became daily more apparent, was attended by an aged priest, to whose exhortations she listened with deep reverence; but when touched by the depressed state of this beautiful young creature the holy man endeavoured to cheer her by describing the splendour of a royal marriage, the luxury of courts, or the enjoyments of a peaceful home, the dying Princess derived no comfort from what she, no less than the priest himself, felt to be "nought but vanity." The contrast presented by this scene would have afforded to a close observer matter for deep reflection. The reverend father, who had long since forsaken the world, grew eloquent in the praises of its pomps and vanities, to a young Princess, the daughter of a mighty Conqueror, who himself afforded a melancholy proof of their utter inability to furnish happi-

ness or consolation to a mind diseased beyond recovery.

The Princess always spoke kindly to her companions and attendants; and endeavoured to console Dame Ansberge, by telling her that when she was no more, Margaret would fill her place, and be to her kind nurse another foster-daughter. Then to Margaret she said—"When I am dead, you must convey me to Normandy, that I may be interred in the chancel of the Cathedral at Bayeux. Do not forget the Tapestry, Margaret, at which we have so often worked, under my dear mother's eye. Alas! when I began it my heart was full of hope! Entreat my uncle, the Bishop, to let it always hang round the cathedral on solemn fête-days; and, above all, on the anniversary of my death, let him never forget me in his prayers."

After these conversations, Elgiva was frequently seized with a slight delirium, when she would sing the Saxon songs which Harold had taught her, during his residence at the ducal palace, after their betrothal.

On the morning of the tenth of December, one thousand and sixty-six, the weather being unusually bright and clear for the season, even in those southern latitudes, a loud, ringing voice from the mast head was heard to exclaim "Land! land!" The cry was taken up, and "The coast of Spain!" was resounded in joyful shouts from "stem to

stern," until the echoes were borne in faint murmurs into the chamber of the dying Princess. "The coast of Spain!" repeated Elgiva with a feeble sigh; and in that sigh her pure spirit fled its earthly tenement for ever.

CHAPTER XV.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER OF SPAIN.

FERDINAND, the First, divided the kingdom of Spain, at his death, amongst his children ; but to the eldest, Sancho, (surnamed "the Strong," on account of his valour and prodigious strength) he only gave Castile.

The chronicles insist that the king committed great injustice in giving a portion of his kingdom to each of his sons, and even to his daughters. Sancho felt it in this light, and it became his most ardent desire to restore the monarchy to its legitimate form, by subjecting the whole of Spain to one crowned head. This ambitious prince, at the beginning of his reign, was only withheld by the entreaties of the queen, his mother, from at once declaring war against those whom he looked upon as his rivals. But no sooner had the queen breathed her last, than he undertook the conquest of the

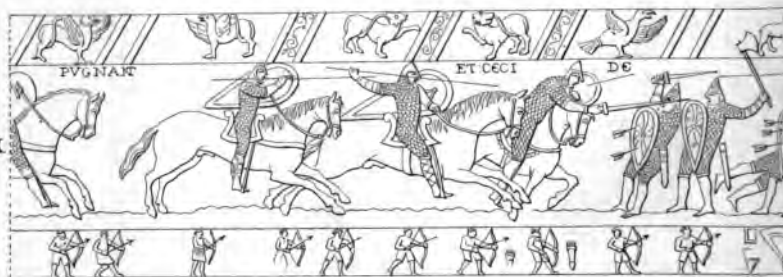
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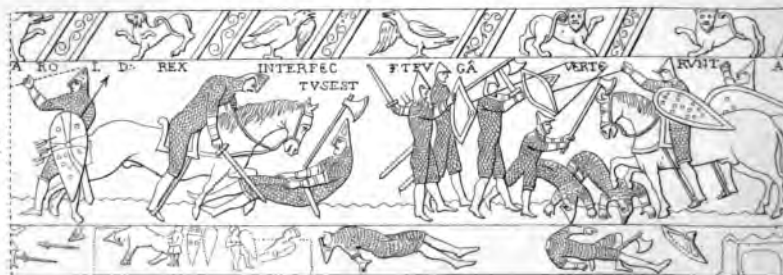


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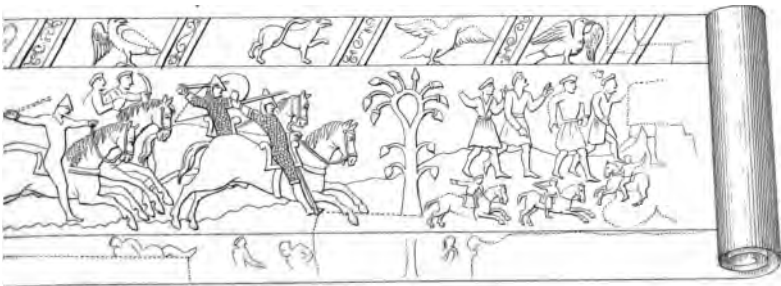
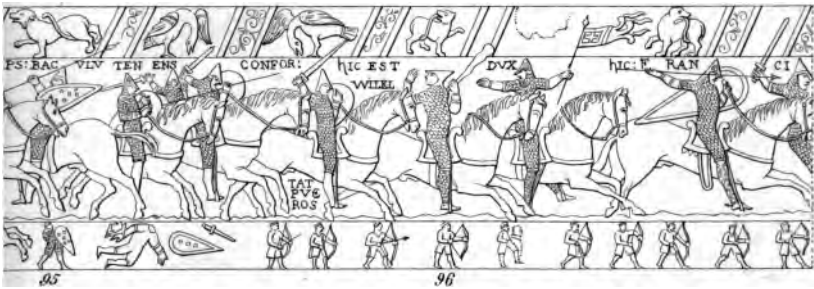
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provinces bequeathed to his brothers by Ferdinand.

Swayed by the loftiest ambition, and anxious to strengthen his party, Sancho sought an alliance with the Normans, who were already celebrated throughout Europe; whilst the queen, on the other hand, fondly cherished the hope that her son's disposition would be softened, and a polish imparted to his rude manners by his union with a young and charming princess, the fame of whose beauty and accomplishments had, through the reports of the Norman pilgrims, speedily reached the Court of Spain.

Donna Sancha, accompanied by the king, proceeded to Santarem, where the Norman vessel, bringing the Princess Elgiva, was daily expected. Divided between the dread of Sancho's violent temper, and her faith in the softening influences of a first love, the queen wandered, in a state of feverish anxiety, on the sea-shore, followed by her attendants. Over a long black dress, which swept the ground and partly concealed her majestic figure, the queen wore a mantilla or veil, which being fastened to the head, and hanging in graceful folds down the back, revealed her fine features; but the wrinkles on her forehead betrayed that age, rather than anxiety or grief, had left its traces there. In truth her face presented a marked contrast to her buoyant step as she paced up and down the strand in the mingled excitement of hope and joy. Alas!

how little does a mother learn from the sternest teaching of experience! On the brink of the grave, and admitting in her own person the vanity of all earthly hopes, she still cherishes for her beloved offspring the bright yet illusive dreams of her earlier days.

And now a ship was signalled from the port of Santarem; Donna Sancha at first could scarcely distinguish the small speck on the horizon, but gradually it increased—the white sails became visible, and at length “The Star of the Seas” swept gracefully into the harbour in all its proud beauty—the bright sunlight glancing full on its magnificent ornaments and gilding. At this moment, the King, followed by a numerous retinue, advanced to meet his mother.

The crowd had naturally expected to see the ship gaily decorated with streamers, and to hear the joyful cries and exulting shouts of the mariners on entering the harbour; but no standard floated in the breeze, the sailors were grouped in mournful silence, and the captain stood apart on the deck, in an attitude of deep dejection. At this strange and painful sight, all hearts were chilled with a melancholy foreboding, and a solemn silence prevailed among the spectators.

A bier covered with a white pall, and ornamented with ribbons and pearls, was carefully brought on shore. An aged priest and two weeping women accompanied the procession, which was formed by the

sailors, and headed by Vital. On approaching the king and the queen mother, Vital raised the shroud, and beneath it appeared the lifeless body of Elgiva. Her arms were crossed upon her bosom, on which rested a crucifix. Her lovely features, composed and beautiful in death, preserved the same look of angelic innocence, which, during her short life, had won her the love and affection of all hearts.

"Behold, my lord," said Vital, with a deep obeisance, "the daughter of William Duke of Normandy, the Conqueror of England. He sent her, in accordance with his promise, to be your bride; but heaven had willed it otherwise. She died on the passage."

"God's will be done!" exclaimed the king piously. While the queen, overcome with grief, fell on her knees beside the mortal remains of her on whom so many hopes had rested.

"As envoy of the Duke of Normandy, may I hope, my lord, that this proof of my master's friendship will be duly taken into account in the treaty which he desires to conclude with Spain?"

"The Duke of Normandy is sufficiently to be pitied for the loss of so devoted a daughter," replied Sancho, with emotion; "and I will not add to his affliction by refusing his demands. The treaty shall be concluded and sworn, as though Heaven had not thought fit to sever the bonds which were to have united us."

Donna Sancha had risen from her knees. "The

Princess," she said, "shall be interred with the same honours that, as Queen of Castile, would have been accorded to her."

"Madame," answered Vital, "the Duchess of Normandy shall be made acquainted with your generous intentions ; and, with the tender feelings of a mother, she will justly appreciate your gracious sympathy. But the lamented Princess made it a dying request that her remains should be transported to her native land to be interred at Bayeux."

"Be it, then, according to her wishes," at once cried the King, who could not remove his eyes from the beautiful image of the dead.

"And we will send to you," added the Queen, "an Arab physician, one converted to our holy faith, who is master of the art of preserving dead bodies from decay. He will exert his skill in preserving the remains of the Princess, so that the Duchess may look upon her beloved daughter once more, before the tomb closes upon her for ever." Then bending reverently over the bier, the Queen imprinted a kiss on the cold forehead of Elgiva, while the spectators, deeply affected, fell on their knees and in solemn unison chanted the hymn for the dead. This pious homage was all that the betrothed of Harold received at the hands of the loyal people, over whom the interests of a selfish policy would have driven her unwillingly to reign.

A few days after the scene we have attempted to

describe, "The Star of the Seas" was on her homeward course to Normandy; but meeting with contrary winds, the voyage was long and tedious. The Princess Elgiva's chamber had been transformed into a chapel, where Margaret spent many a melancholy hour in solitary prayer.

One fine moonlight evening, Margaret, lost in a train of painful reflections, stood leaning over the vessel's side, mechanically watching the fitful play of the moonbeams on the restless billows. The circumstances in which she had been placed, by keeping her in a state of feverish excitement, had hitherto, in some degree, sustained her courage. But now that all was over, and she was abandoned to her own resources, where, in her isolated state, could she seek protection? Here, at least, thought she, I have this infirm old man to watch over and care for; so long as at my approach his countenance beams with gratitude, and his looks of tenderness and affection follow my footsteps as I pace the deck, I feel that I am not alone. But in a few days he too will leave me. True, his son is now of knightly rank, but what avails it? the blood which flows in his veins is not the more ennobled, nor am I the less bound by my solemn vow. Ashamed of thoughts she dared not avow even to herself, Margaret buried her face in her hands.

"Are you in pain, madame?" inquired Vital approaching her.

"No; I was admiring the moon's light upon the

waters. In the narrow line traced by her bright rays, see how yon dancing waves sparkle like diamonds; then, after one short interval of dazzling brilliancy, they plunge into the dreary, dark expanse beyond, and are seen no more. And is it not thus with life? Be it cheered by the bright rays of happiness, or overcast with the thick gloom of misfortune and grief, is not the result ever the same?"

"But, Margaret, would you not rather be yon luminous wave, shining with hopeful light through the surrounding gloom, like the traveller's guiding star, than that dark billow, whose memory is annihilated with its existence, leaving no blessing behind it?"

And, then, with all the earnest eloquence that a heartfelt passion only gives, Vital poured forth his tale of love. He painted in glowing colours the growth of his passion, from his first interview with Margaret, and dwelt in pleading accents on his constancy, which her coldness and indifference had failed to shake. He urged how tenderly and how anxiously he had striven to prove worthy of her, and appealed to the Duke of Normandy's promise of advancement, which opened a bright future before him.

Margaret heard him with a rapturous delight she scarcely cared to conceal, and when he had ceased speaking she replied, in tones of deep emotion—"From the feeling of unalloyed happiness with which I have listened to the avowal of your love,

Vital, my heart tells me that my fate is decided. I can never accept *your* hand, my oath forbids it, but I here promise never to bestow *mine* upon another, and may this pledge prove some slight consolation to you."

Strange as it may seem, Vital did not appear to stand in need of consolation. With all the warmth with which he had pleaded his passion, he now expressed his gratitude for the love Margaret deigned to bestow upon him, but no murmur or syllable of regret at her refusal of his hand escaped his lips. Indeed, from that eventful night until the day of their arrival off the coast of Normandy, Margaret noticed that he appeared supremely happy, and her pride, no less than her love, was deeply wounded. "It is doubtless a great honour," thought she, "for Vital to have gained the affections of the daughter of the Count d'Anscarise, but I scarcely expected that he would rest contented with the bare honour alone."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

HISTORY relates that at the moment of ascending the English throne, William hesitated, or rather feigned a hesitation which he could scarcely have felt, and whose existence was as brief as it was unaccountable. Be this as it may, it is sufficient for the purposes of our narrative to record, that, soon after his coronation, he confided the government of his new conquest to the Bishop Odo, and embarking at Pevensey, proceeded to Rouen, with the double object of placing in security the rich plunder he had brought over from England, and of expediting the raising of new levies to aid in the subjugation of the northern provinces of Britain, which still held out against him.

A number of young Saxon nobles, who had been won over to the Norman party, accompanied

William the Conqueror ; and their beauty, if we may credit the testimony of Guillaume de Poitiers, was most remarkable, and only surpassed by that of the loveliest maidens of Normandy. There was also present at the Court of Rouen, say the Chronicles, Raoul, father-in-law to the King of France, with a numerous suite, including many of the French nobility. The rich dresses of the King of England and his companions struck the Normans with astonishment and admiration ; and the luxury displayed in the palace surpassed everything hitherto known among them. The most expensive viands were served on gold and silver plate, or if by chance among these were found some few vessels of ivory or bronze, it was because the beauty of the ornaments or the workmanship gave them an intrinsic value scarcely inferior to that of the more precious metals. William was on the point of presiding at a splendid banquet, when he was informed that Vital demanded an audience. Margaret and the good Dame Ansberge had already imparted to the future Queen of England (for Matilda was not yet crowned) the melancholy intelligence of her beloved daughter's death.

“Weep not, madame,” said the King ; “your daughter, in obedience to our commands, left her country to obtain for our subjects the important advantages of a commercial alliance with Spain—her end was glorious—and let this reflection be

some consolation for her loss, and tend to moderate the transports of your grief."

"My lord," replied the Duchess, in a voice broken with emotion, "I pray you be not surprised if I feel a mother's tenderness for my daughter. I solemnly protest, that if the price of my blood could restore her to life, I would cheerfully bid it flow. Can you believe that I shall enjoy the pomp and luxury with which I am surrounded, when the consciousness never leaves me that my beloved child breathed her last in a frail bark, on the wide ocean, untended by a mother's love? Oh! far from my heart be such hardness; and even your authority, my lord Duke, cannot impose such insensibility upon me."¹⁰

Then the Duchess, turning to Margaret and Dame Ansberge, proceeded, amid the interruptions caused by her excessive grief, to ask a thousand questions respecting the last moments of her dear, lost child.

At this moment Vital was introduced. Bending his knee gracefully before the King, he presented the treaty, which had been ratified by Sancho the Strong, and the clerk in attendance read it out in a loud voice. William, in the meantime, happened to cast his eyes on the elder Vital, who had followed his son into the gallery, and who stood at a little distance from the royal group, leaning on the arm of Sir Roger de Beaumont. The King, who by

chance had not set eyes on him since his arrival in Normandy, looked attentively at him, as though striving to recall his familiar features.

When the clerk had concluded, William said :
“ These conditions are far more favourable than we had anticipated, considering that she who was to knit the bond of amity between ourselves and Spain is no more. King Sancho grants to our Saxon, no less than to our Norman subjects, free intercourse with his country. He promises protection to our pilgrims, and he demands nothing in return, save that we should permit such of our brave knights as may be disposed to fight under his banner, to join the Spanish army. The King has added to his other favours a number of magnificent presents. Truly, Vital, this is marvellous, you have most faithfully executed our orders.”

The young Fleming bowed.

“ *Par la splendeur de Dieu !*” continued William, “ you are a skilful ambassador—name your reward, and if it be in the King’s power to grant, it is yours, were it a whole province of England.”

“ I demand no portion of the conquered land, my lord,” returned Vital, whose voice faltered as he looked at his father’s pale and anxious countenance, “ I do but claim the restitution of our inheritance in Normandy.”

“ Ha !” cried the King, his eyes flashing with anger, as they fell upon the elder Vital, “ what means this ?”

"I am Henri d'Arques!" said the young man in a firm voice.

The whole assembly was moved at the sight of the aged Count, who stretching his arms towards William, exclaimed, "My nephew, William!—son of my brother Richard!"

"You little heeded this in times of old, good uncle," replied the King bitterly.

"I greatly erred, William, and sincerely do I lament my fault. Let the faithful services of the son redeem the father's errors, if, indeed, they be not already sufficiently expiated by years of exile from his beloved country. Believe me, it is hard to eat the bread of charity in a foreign land; and often has my heart throbbed with joy to hear of your glorious achievements, when grief had nearly caused that heart to cease to beat."

"I would willingly restore your province of Arques, and bury the past in oblivion," said William, in a softened tone, "but you must feel that it is impossible; for I have sworn, by all that is most sacred, that your bones shall never rest in Norman soil."

"That, at least, need be no obstacle," said the young Count, with a smile; "I have brought a waggon load of earth from Flanders, and my father will one day, a very distant one, I trust, be buried in it. Thus, Sire, you may grant his prayer, and still observe your oath."¹¹

The King uttered an exclamation of joy. "Come,"

said he, laughingly, "Sir Roger de Beaumont was in the plot, I see. Well, be it so. But the restitution of Arques only fulfils half my promise. Cousin Henri, you cannot have forgotten the other half."

The young Count advanced towards Margaret; "Can you forgive me," said he, "for being ambitious to obtain, not your hand alone, in fulfilment of a duty, but your free and unbiassed affection, in obedience to the dictates of your own heart?"

"Upon one condition only," returned Mademoiselle D'Anscarise, smiling through her tears, for she had but just concluded her affecting conversation with the Duchess: "that my betrothed, Henri d'Arques, can forgive me for bestowing my affections on the humble Vital, as the humble Vital forgave me for keeping my plighted faith to Henri d'Arques."

The kind and benevolent Duchess overhearing these words, and forgetting her own sorrow in the joy of others, took both their hands, and uniting them in hers, said: "You deserve God's blessing, my children, for in this happy union both love and duty are combined."

Not long afterwards, William's uncle, the Count d'Arques, resumed possession of his domains. He was accompanied by his son, his lovely bride, and Dame Ansberge, who refused to be separated from

Notes.

Note 1, page 13.

Historians have attributed various names to this Princess, daughter of William the Conqueror. By some she is styled "ADELIS;" by others, "AGATHA," and even ELA; whilst in the Bayeux register is inscribed the name "ÆLIS," which, in all probability, is only another form of "ADELE." We recognise the last in the name written "ÆLFGIVA" in the Tapestry. (M. LAMBERT. *Réfutation des Objections faites contre l'Antiquité de la Tapisserie de Bayeux*, p. 14.)

Ordéric Vital, vol. i., p. 382, relates in the following words the end of Ælfgiva, or Elgiva, as we have taken the liberty of writing it:—"Elgiva, in obedience to her father's will, was affianced to the King of Spain; but she was constant in her love for the Saxon Prince Harold, and her heart revolted against this alliance with another. She therefore fervently prayed to the Almighty that He would not suffer her to reach Spain, but rather that He would take her to Himself. The earnest supplications of the afflicted Princess were doubtless heard, for she died on the voyage; and, in obedience to her last wishes, her body was brought back to her native country and interred at Bayeux."

"We agree with M. de la Rue," says M. Ed. Lambert, who has traced, in one of the sections of the Tapestry, the promise made to Harold of one of William the Conqueror's daughters. This circumstance is portrayed in the following manner:—A secretary is sent to inform the Princess of the alliance contemplated for her, and he touches Elgiva's left cheek with the

tips of the fingers of his right hand, which was probably the ceremonial in use on similar occasions.

Ælfgyva was interred in the cathedral at Bayeux, where, on the 10th of December in every year, the anniversary of her death was, for some considerable period, celebrated by solemn masses.

Note 2, page 32.

In "RICHER, *Vie des Hommes Illustres*, comparés les uns avec les autres," and in l'Abbé PREVOST, *Histoire de Guillaume*, p. 123, is found the anecdote relating to Mademoiselle d'Anscarise and her companion. The last-named author cites the testimony of Rapin.

Note 3, page 37.

The part taken by the Comte d'Arques, William the Conqueror's uncle, in the rebellion of the Norman nobles, is fully detailed in the different histories of Normandy, but the particulars we have related are chiefly gathered from LE MEGISSIER, *Histoire et Chronique de la Normandie*, and LA FRESNAYE, *Nouvelle Histoire de la Normandie (enrichie de Notes prises au Muséum de Londres)*.

It is but just, however, to observe, that these last-named historians make no mention of the second incognito of the Count d'Arques, nor of the prudent conduct pursued by his son Henri, of whose very existence they appear to be profoundly ignorant. Assuming that they adopted our view of the subject, this silence seems natural enough, for the young Count having deemed it advisable to withdraw from a vindictive court, where his actions were viewed with distrust and suspicion, any further allusion to him would of course be unnecessary.

M. de la Rue conceives Vital to have been one of Bishop Odo's vassals, and he cites a charter of that Prelate, in which frequent mention is made of this personage, but without distinguishing him by any title. The identity discovered by us, between *the* Vital of the Tapestry and the son of the Count d'Arques, is not therefore wholly unsupported by the authority of antiquarians.

Note 4, page 48.

The manuscript of Æsop's Fables, here alluded to, is still preserved in the library at Leyden. It is well known that King Alfred the Great translated these fables from the Greek, in the ninth century. (M. ED. LAMBERT, *Réfutation*, &c.)

Note 5, page 52.

Parliaments, general assemblies of the nation, the Saxon word is *Witenagemot*.

Note 6, p. 62.

This circumstance, and the language used by Hugh de Grantemesnil, are quoted in the same terms by LE MEGISSIER, c. 49, p. 98, but they refer to Matilda's brother, and not to her father.

Note 7, page 74.

This description is borrowed from the history of France, by Henry Martin. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that in all that relates to the Conquest of England, we have strictly adhered to the account of it given by THIERRY, DEPPING, &c. The nature of Harold's oath was a point which gave rise to some difficulty; but contemporary authors having described the circumstance, according to their belief in the justice of the Saxon or the Norman cause, we have naturally adopted the view taken of it by the Princess.

Note 8, page 97.

Here again appears a slight difficulty. Some historians suppose that the Tapestry was continued up to the time of William's coronation, and that one end of it was afterwards destroyed, which would account for the unfinished state in which it has been handed down to us. We might, indeed, on this uncertain point, cite the authority of the Abbé de la Rue (*Recherches sur la Tapisserie de Bayeux*, p. 16); but we are aware that many arguments, supported by the clearest evidence, have been adduced against his opinion, by men of learning, whose judgment on any other point we should consider incontrovertible.

Note 9, page 97.

La Tapisserie de Bayeux, "ce long récit brodé!" (this long embroidered history) expression empruntée à M. H. LIQUET. (*Histoire de Normandie*, t. 2, p. 247.)

Note 10, page 122.

These words are copied almost literally from our old chronicles, and were addressed by Matilda to the Duke, in answer to his touching appeal to her, on the unnatural rebellion of Robert, whom she was accused of favouring.

Note 11, page 124.

Some readers, on a cursory perusal, might charge us with having borrowed this idea from the celebrated wit Roquelaure; but, when it is borne in mind that Henri d'Arques lived several centuries before Roquelaure, the plagiarism, if such there be in this case, should be attributed to the latter.

The authenticity of this incident, however, is of little importance: our object in this slight sketch being simply to give an idea of the manners of the times. As an apology for the undignified language we have at times put into the mouth of William, we shall quote a passage from William of Malmesbury, who, speaking of the modifications introduced by the Normans in the manners of the Saxons, says:—"The passion for mirth and raillery was so general, that the bitterest enemies often suspended hostilities, in the hottest moment of a siege, to indulge in the less dangerous encounter of wit and repartee. When a knight of either party was so minded, he announced his intention by appearing clothed in white, and this signal was at once understood.

Note 12, page 126.

With regard to Wadard, M. de la Rue imagines that his figure in the Tapestry represents *a sentinel in charge of the stores of the army*. M. Ed. Lambert successfully refutes this conjecture, by proving that Wadard was *purveyor to the army*, and that his name was understood by contemporaries to designate his office.

graceful and accomplished young lady had been brought up by her prudent mother in such a manner that, upon her entrance into the world, she might profit by the good qualities which she inherited from her father. The rejoicings and festivities on the occasion of Matilda's nuptials were on a magnificent scale. The Count of Flanders bringing with him "innumerable presents," and attended by the principal nobles of his court, accompanied his daughter to the Château d'Eu, where they were welcomed by William, who, on this joyful occasion, was attended by a brilliant retinue of knights and nobles, all arrayed with more than usual magnificence. The Duke hoped this display of pomp and wealth would impress the Flemish nobles with a high sense of his power, and he trusted also, that it would be interpreted by his fair bride as an additional proof of his devotion.

Incited by the Emperor, Henry the Third, who dreaded an alliance between William and his personal enemy, Baldwin, the Pope, Leo the Ninth, opposed the marriage under pretence of the near relationship of the parties. The Pope's opposition was set at defiance; but so daring an infraction of the Sovereign Pontiff's commands could not be suffered to pass unpunished, and the Duchy of Normandy was immediately put under an interdict. Nothing in our days can give an idea of the disastrous effects of such a fearful sentence. No religious ceremony was allowed to be performed in the churches, crucifixes and altars were overthrown, relics of saints were removed from their shrines, and ignominiously strewed upon the ground; the church doors were torn off their hinges, and their places filled up with thorns and brambles, whilst the dead were refused Christian burial. The baptism of infants and the last confession of the dying were the only sacred rites permitted to the panic-stricken Normans.

Who can describe the grief and consternation of the Duchess at this awful and unexpected calamity. The religion which Matilda professed owes much of the pomp and splendour of its festivals to the presence of royalty; and, from her earliest years, Matilda had devoutly joined in the public ceremonials of the Church, and had ever considered an act of devotion as her

highest privilege and her greatest happiness. The sudden interruption of those religious duties, so dear to her heart, when the marriage festivities were scarce over, struck her with terror and dismay. The Duchess, too, felt a deep interest in the welfare and prosperity of her new subjects, and was anxious to gain their affections in return ; but conscious that she was herself the cause of the fearful calamity which had befallen them, she dreaded lest they should look upon her with dislike and abhorrence. So far from this being the case, however, we have the unanimous testimony of historians that no Princess was ever more deeply beloved while she lived, or more sincerely lamented when she died. But the horror and fear produced by this terrible sentence of the Holy See were greatly aggravated by the hateful character of the Prelate selected by the Pope to pronounce it.

Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen, was reputed to be the greatest magician of the age. It is even said that he was aided in his works of darkness by a familiar demon, who is known in the annals of Normandy as the celebrated Thouret. It is easy to conceive that the terrors of the excommunication, coupled in the people's imagination with the dreaded powers of sorcery and magic, were more than doubly magnified.

William dreading the fatal consequences of such a measure, despatched the Italian monk, Lanfranc, to Rome, with an indignant appeal to the Pope against the interdict. This able and experienced messenger, by his eloquent representations, obtained from the Holy Father an immediate revocation of the sentence, upon condition that William and Matilda should build and endow, at their own expense, two magnificent monasteries, besides several hospitals.

Greatly exasperated by the Archbishop of Rouen's interference on this occasion, William convened an assembly of bishops, under the presidency of the Pope's legate.* They convicted Mauger of high crimes and misdemeanours, deposed him from his office, and banished him to the island of Guernsey, which then belonged to

* Miss Strickland says that this Council was held at Lisieux in 1055, her authority being Sir Harris Nicolas's *Chronology of History*.—*Note by Translator.*

the Duke of Normandy. A short time afterwards Mauger's dead body having been thrown upon the sea-shore, was found by some fishermen on the beach near Cherbourg.

Thus reconciled with the Church, Matilda seems to have derived increased satisfaction from the performance of those devotional exercises which her true piety dictated, and of which she had been for a time so cruelly deprived.

Ordéric Vital, a monk of St. Evroult, graphically relates Matilda's visit to his monastery:—"Having heard of the strict discipline, and deep devotion of the monks of St. Evroult, the Duchess Matilda was desirous of visiting the abbey, with the view of offering up in that holy spot her prayers and supplications to the Almighty. She was most honourably received by the whole assembly of monks, who conducted her to the chapel, where she made an offering on the altar of one mark of gold, and then commended herself to the devout prayers of the abbot and the whole congregation. She also presented the abbot with a richly embroidered cope, adorned with gold and pearls.

She was no less active in bestowing substantial proofs of her munificence upon the Monastery of Marmoutier; and besides a rich cope and other costly ornaments destined for the abbot, she promised "many benefits in reversion."*

Other no less essential duties, however, recalled Matilda to the ducal palace, where, at this time, her numerous family had assembled. Her eldest born, the gay, the chivalrous Robert, appears before us, as he is represented in all the portraits of the times, wearing the rich costume of a young cavalier, with his "toque" or cap carelessly drooping on one side of his head, and bearing his favourite falcon perched upon his wrist.

Matilda's second son, Richard, was a prince of great promise; but he met with an accident, by which he unfortunately lost his life, when in pursuit of a stag in the New Forest, and sprinkled with his blood the soil so lately conquered by his father.

William, the third son, gave striking evidence in his

* "Grands biens céans," according to the expression of the Monk d'Eudemare.

youth of the courage, skill, and ambition, for which in after years he became renowned.

Henry, surnamed Beauclerc, was not born till after the conquest of England.

But if the quarrelsome and uncontrollable tempers of the young Princes caused many an hour of pain and anguish to Matilda, on the other hand, she derived the greatest comfort and consolation from the gentle and affectionate disposition of her daughters. Our old chroniclers alone describe the respective qualities of each of these Princesses, for all modern historians have confounded one with the other, though each was possessed of some distinctive trait of character. Cicely, we are told, devoted herself to acts of piety and devotion, being destined from her earliest infancy to join the pious sisterhood of the order of the Holy Trinity at Caen, of which order she afterwards became the abbess. Constance took pleasure in following the example of her beloved mother. She was gentle, kind, and good; and, like the Duchess, was ever ardently praying for the "blessing of peace." *

Adela is known as the special friend and benefactor of the poor. Agatha buried her grief for the loss of her lover (Prince Edwin) in the gloom of a cloister, where, in conformity to the rules of the holy order, she lived in piety and godliness, and died at length in the odour of sanctity. The beautiful and melancholy Ælf-giva, to whose history so much painful interest is attached, and whose betrothal is pictured in the Bayeux Tapestry, is almost beatified by St. Evroult.†

* Le "nectar de la paix."

† Madame Emma L. makes no mention of Gundred, another daughter of William the Conqueror, who married William de Warren, first Earl of Surrey. This Princess, according to ancient records, died in 1085, and was interred in the Chapter House of the Priory at Lewes, of which (conjointly with her husband), she was the founder. At the dissolution of the priory, Gundred's tomb was removed to the church at Isfield, and in 1775, the sculptured slab of black marble, which once formed the lid of her coffin, was discovered in the Shirley chancel of the church, where it formed part of the tomb of Edward Shirley, Esq. This stone, with the permission of the representatives of the Shirley family was thence removed to the church of Southover, where it still remains.

Some workmen employed in the year 1845 in excavating the

Such ingenuous tributes of praise, scattered with a liberal hand through the pages of the Norman Chronicles, testify to the virtues of these Princesses; and, if we compare this genuine admiration with the applause bestowed on qualities of a totally different nature, which were in vogue at that period of chivalrous gallantry, we cannot fail to acknowledge the wholesome influence which the pious Duchess exercised, by her example, over at least one portion of her family.

But great and important events were impending, which threatened for the future to withdraw Matilda from her tranquil occupations at home. Impelled by some strange caprice which has ever remained a mystery to historians, the English King, Edward the Confessor, had by turns designated the Duke of Normandy and the Saxon Prince Harold as his successor to the throne of England. (*Histoire de Normandie, par LIQUET, t. 2, p. 191.*)

Daring and unsuspecting, Harold came to Normandy, to claim the hostages whom Edward had committed to the custody of William. The Norman Duke greeted the young Prince with great apparent cordiality, promised him the hand of his daughter Ælfgiva in marriage, and drew from him a solemn oath, which has not been more clearly explained by contemporary authors, than the singular and evasive conduct of the English monarch.

William humbly submitted his motives for invading earth, near the western ruins of the Priory, for the construction of a railway to Hastings, discovered a leaden coffer or cist which, on being opened, was found to contain the remains of Gundred (the name "Gydrada," as it is spelt, being cut upon the lid). Near the same spot, and in a similar coffer, were also discovered the remains of William de Warren. The cists in which these bones were found deposited, are not the coffins in which the bodies were originally buried. It is supposed by some, that on rebuilding the church in the reign of Henry the Second, the bodies of the founders of the Priory were disinterred, and the bones deposited in these leaden coffers, and thus reinterred. The spot where they were discovered cannot be considered as part of the Chapter House site. These relics are now deposited in the church of Southover.

We are indebted for the above account to the "Illustrated London News" of November 8, 1845, to which we refer our readers, and in which they will find some interesting particulars, as given by Dr. Pickford, of Brighton.—*Note by Translator.*

England to the tribunal of the Holy See. Harold, on the contrary, haughtily refused to recognise the Pope's right to interfere. The question was debated by the Holy Father and his Cardinals, assembled in solemn conclave at the Lateran, and the Church adjudged the contested kingdom to William.

(1066) Heaven itself, in the eyes of the credulous multitude, seemed to take part in the expedition. (THIERRY. *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*, vol. 1, p. 266.)

For it happened that about Easter, a comet was visible in the horizon, at which the monk Elmer exclaimed, "Thou art come! a matter of great lamentation to many a mother art thou come!" This sad foreboding, as regarded the Duchess Matilda, had nearly been realised, for serious differences arose between the Duke, her husband, and the members of her own family. William had sent Hugh de Grantmesnil to Flanders, to request the co-operation of the Count, his father-in-law, in his project for the invasion of England. Baldwin, who on the death of Henry the First, had been appointed "Regent," or, according to the title then adopted, "Marquis of France," did not consider himself authorised to employ the French forces under his command, in seconding the ambitious views of his son-in-law, and declined giving his assistance to the Duke. William deeply resented this refusal, and replied in terms highly offensive to the Count. Baldwin of Mons, his son, was greatly irritated at this, and a breach between the parties appeared inevitable, when Hugh de Grantmesnil, anxious to prevent so great a misfortune, earnestly appealed to the young Count's affection for his sister. On hearing the beloved name of Matilda, Baldwin of Mons's anger was instantly appeased, and shortly afterwards a squadron of Flemish ships, by command of Baldwin, sailed from a seaport of Flanders, and proceeded to join the Norman fleet.

But though actively engaged in making preparations for his favourite expedition, William did not neglect the interests of his Duchy, and his first care was to provide for the safe government of Normandy during his absence. A council was held at Bonneville-sur-Toques, at which the Duchess Matilda was proclaimed

Regent by the unanimous suffrages of the whole assembly.

Contemporary authors, in recording this event, have endowed Matilda with every quality of mind and person capable of justifying the nation's choice. "She possessed," we are told, "a knowledge of state affairs, wisdom, prudence, benevolence, and, above all, an affable and gracious bearing, which won for her the love and veneration of a whole people."

Matilda caused a magnificent vessel to be built under her own directions, and at her own expense, to convey the Duke to England, and which at the moment of embarkation she presented to her beloved consort. At the prow of the vessel was seen the figure of a genius holding a trumpet to his lips with one hand, and with the other pointing to the English coast, thus intimating that, in that land, victory awaited the arms of William. (*Histoire Excellente et Héroïque de Roi Guillaume, par D'EUEMARE, prêtre et chanoine de l'Eglise de Rouen, 1629.*)

It would be foreign to our object here to recount the unexampled success of the Norman expedition, for William's brilliant achievements have been recorded by many an abler pen than ours. We would simply devote a few pages to a description of the prudent and successful government of Matilda, in Normandy. Ordéric Vital describes her, after the departure of William, "as being surrounded with snares, and having to undergo many violent struggles with the discontented barons, who had declined to join their lord in his expedition, and who took advantage of his absence, by endeavouring to aggrandise their domains. But Matilda, by her prudence, perseverance, and skill, was enabled wholly to defeat their well-laid schemes." Guy d'Amiens, a prelate distinguished for his piety and learning, possessed Matilda's confidence, and was frequently summoned to assist at her councils. Upon him the Duchess conferred the privilege of celebrating the Duke's glorious exploits in songs and poems, which should be worthy of the great Conqueror's fame. Matilda delighted in showing marks of favour and protection to the bards and minstrels, who flocked to the ducal court, and she endeavoured, by every means in her power, to cultivate

among her people a love of poetry and music—arts of refinement which at that period were inseparably linked together. In her home circle she was surrounded by the young Princesses, her daughters, and the relatives of those nobles who had accompanied the Duke in his expedition; and, there, under her gentle guidance and able direction, was executed the celebrated Tapestry, or rather embroidery, which has been the object of so much controversy among antiquarians, but which, nevertheless, has come down to posterity as the most curious and interesting history of the events of that period. It is also a valuable chronicle of the fashions, manners, and customs of the times.

It would be tedious and unnecessary to repeat the arguments of the learned for and against the authenticity of the Bayeux Tapestry. It is well known that LANCELOT and LE PERE MONTFAUCON, in accordance with tradition, attribute the work to Queen Matilda, consort of William the Conqueror. In the last century, Hume, the historian, thought proper to question its antiquity, and to ascribe the execution of the embroidery to the Empress Matilda, granddaughter of William the Conqueror. If, without having recourse to scientific investigations, moral proofs were admitted, it would be sufficient to contrast the wandering life and ambitious character of the Empress, with the domestic virtues and conjugal affection of Queen Matilda, to assure to the latter her right to the appellation of “the *Penelope of chivalrous ages*.”

This marvellous work, the result of so much patience and ingenuity, and above all others the most curious memorial transmitted to us by the Middle Ages, was transported to Paris, when Napoleon the Great projected the invasion of England (*Vie de Guillaume le Conquérant—Parallèle entre les exploits de ce héros et le génie du Premier Consul*. SAUNIER, 1804). It seemed as though the most celebrated warrior of our day had sought in the success of the Norman hero, a precedent to justify his own ambition.

It was, in fact, a most inciting example. The Duke's army set sail on the 22nd of September, 1066, and on the 14th of the following month, the battle of Hastings, and the fall of Harold, had completed William's triumph.

When the news of this splendid victory was brought to Matilda, she was at her devotions, in a small chapel, on the borders of the Seine, at a short distance from Rouen. In commemoration of the glorious event, Matilda caused a church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, to be erected on the spot, and which she named *Notre-Dame-de-Bonnes-Nouvelles*.*

It is probable that the Duchess had her beloved daughter, Ælfgiva, with her at the time. This Princess had been betrothed to Harold, but, on being proclaimed King of England, he broke his plighted faith to Ælfgiva, and married the daughter of the Saxon Count, Morkar. William, after this event, concluded another alliance for his daughter with the King of Spain. We know of nothing more affecting than her simple history, as related by the old chroniclers. Who, in fact, does not sympathize with the young Princess in her deep devotion to the handsome, gay, and chivalrous Harold, who, as well as Ælfgiva, was doomed to an early grave; and who is not touched by the fervent prayer which Ælfgiva, with tears of anguish, breathed to the Almighty: "That he would not suffer her to be conducted to Spain, but rather that He would take her to Himself?" Unfortunate Ælfgiva! whose life was sacrificed to the ambitious projects of her father.

The pious monk, her ingenuous and faithful historian, in compassionating her sorrows, devoutly "thanks Heaven for having granted the prayers of the broken-hearted virgin, and bestowed upon her a heavenly, instead of an earthly crown." Ælfgiva did not live to see the coast of Spain—she died on the voyage, and

* At the siege of Rouen, in 1592, the Church and Monastery of Notre-Dame-de-Bonnes-Nouvelles, founded by Matilda, were laid in ruins. In 1604, the church and convent were rebuilt: and in 1626, the Benedictine monks, of the congregation of St. Maur, established themselves in the convent. After the decree which, in 1793, abolished religious communities, and caused the dispersion of the monks, the church and convent suffered the fate of all sacred edifices in that period of anarchy. They were stripped of their valuable ornaments, and partially destroyed.

Having become the property of the nation, the buildings were appropriated to various uses; and, in later times, they have been converted into barracks for the cavalry.—*Note by Translator.*

her body was conveyed to Bayeux, where it was interred, as already stated.

When the Duke of Normandy had succeeded in making himself master of the English crown, he naturally felt an ardent desire to celebrate his triumph in the midst of his friends and adherents in his new country.

We shall here quote the words of Guillaume de Poitiers, whose graphic style gives all the colouring of fiction to the sober pages of history. Our readers will, at the same time, perceive the use we have made of this author's narrative.

"(1067.) Or on célébra la Pâque du Seigneur dans le monastère de Fécamp, fêtant avec un grand respect le Résurrection du Rédempteur, au milieu d'une foule de vénérables évêques et abbés, humblement placés dans les chœurs des ordres religieux. Le roi força la foule des chevaliers et du peuple d'interrompre ses jeux et de se rendre aux divers offices. A la cour se trouvait le puissant Comte Raoul, beau-père du roi des Français, et un grand nombre de nobles de France.....A la vue des vêtements, couverts et chamarrés d'or du roi et de ses compagnons, tout ce qu'ils avaient vu jusqu'alors leur parut vil. Ils admiraient aussi les vases d'argent et d'or, sur le nombre et l'éclat desquels on pourrait rapporter des choses vraiment incroyables. Dans un repas donné aux Français, on ne but que dans des vases de cette sorte, ou dans des cornes de bœuf ornées aux deux extrémités des mêmes métaux. Enfin ils remarquèrent encore beaucoup de choses convenables à la magnificence royale, et dont a leur retour chez eux ils firent le récit."

Before quitting Normandy to be crowned Queen of England, Matilda was anxious that the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, her work of atonement, should be solemnly consecrated. The whole of the ducal family, the court, and the principal barons, were present at the ceremony. A nun, Matilda's namesake, daughter of a powerful Norman noble, was elected abbess. The King himself presented his daughter Cicely to be dedicated to God in this monastery.

No doubt Matilda's affectionate heart was deeply pained at this sacrifice. But we must not judge of her

feelings wholly by the standard of our own times. The Queen of England might not unnaturally be led to rejoice at the prospect of one of her daughters, at least, being secured in this holy asylum from the bitter cares attendant on riches and grandeur, of which she herself had so often felt the burden. She beheld the young and innocent Princess tranquil and happy, anticipating heavenly joys, and surrounded by the most distinguished ladies of Normandy, who, following the example of the Princess, were anxious to be received among the pious sisterhood.

Matilda also doubtless felt that at no very distant period, her daughter would attain to the sole earthly honour which she coveted for her; and as Queen-abbess reign supreme over this magnificent monastery, which was justly regarded as one of the wonders of the age.

Matilda, from motives of prudence, endeavoured, as long as possible, to defer the ceremony of her coronation. Her great anxiety was to see the Duke firmly established in the conquered kingdom before she adopted the title of "Queen;"* for Matilda knew that the Saxons would not willingly bestow this title on the consort of a foreign conqueror. But the newly elected monarch deemed it essential to his greatness that his beloved consort and his children should share the honours of his throne.

Matilda, therefore, in obedience to the Duke's wishes, embarked for England, accompanied by the principal Norman barons, their wives and daughters, and the most eminent prelates of Normandy, who were all eager to follow their beloved Duchess.

Matilda's acceptance of the domains of a rich Saxon noble, has been imputed to her, by some historians, as a crime; but before accusing her of injustice in this matter, it might be proper to inquire how far the newly crowned Queen of England would be at liberty to reject a gift offered to her by her husband, as a trophy he had won from the vanquished Saxons.

An explanation of this circumstance has been sought for in a romantic incident, whereas, from William's

* This word, the modern "Queen," originally signifies "lady," or "woman."

well-known despotic character, no explanation was needed. According to the account referred to, Brihtric, in his youth, had travelled to Flanders, and when in that country had refused the offer made him by Baldwin of Matilda's hand, and the Duchess to avenge this insult had, it is said, deprived the unfortunate Brihtric of his possessions. The brilliant alliances which the Count of Flanders had it in his power to contract for his daughter, make the probability of such a refusal extremely doubtful; while, if we consider Matilda's youth when she married William the Conqueror, as well as the natural kindness and generosity of her disposition, we shall see that little faith is to be put in the truth of so extraordinary a statement.

Indeed, Matilda gave proof of her disinterestedness on the occasion of a lawsuit, which William abruptly terminated by adjudging to the Duchess the disputed lands, which were claimed by two Norman noblemen. Matilda, by a sort of tacit protest against the sentence, immediately disposed of the property in favour of the monastery of St. Pierre de Jumièges. (*Etudes sur l'Administration de la Justice et de l'Organization Judiciaire en Normandie*, par M. PEZET, 3 tom., *des Mémoires de la Société d'Agriculture de Bayeux*, p. 125.)

About this time the Norman party received a most important acquisition in the person of Edwin and Morkar, brothers-in-law of the late King. These young noblemen were possessed of great riches and uncommon personal attractions, and they also were endowed with so many amiable qualities, that they were beloved by the Saxon clergy, and idolized by the people. William, in order to secure their adherence, promised the hand of his daughter Agatha to Edwin, and in this way tranquillity was apparently established in England, when, on a sudden, unmistakable symptoms of an insurrection appeared. Edwin and Morkar, feeling that they were objects of distrust and suspicion at the court of William, and being carried away by the entreaties of their countrymen, placed themselves at the head of the rebellious party. Morkar was made prisoner at the commencement of the war, and kept closely confined in a fortress. Soon after, Edwin, surprised by a troop of

Norman cavaliers, was defeated, and had his head cut off in a skirmish. It was taken up by a soldier, and carried on the point of a lance to William, who, it is said, was sensibly affected at the sight.

William immediately sent back to Normandy, "Matilda his consort, whom he dearly loved; that, secure from the troubles which agitated England, she might devote herself to the interest of Robert, their youthful heir." (ORD. VITAL, liv. 4, p. 180.)

The Queen took with her Agatha, her afflicted daughter, who, soon after her arrival in Normandy, retired into a convent, and took the veil. "She had most tenderly loved the handsome youth, Edwin," and could not be consoled for his loss, say the old historians.

But yet more grievous trials awaited Matilda. "The death of her father, the grief and desolation of her mother, and the cruelty of her brothers, tore her heart with anguish." (ORD. VITAL.)

Baldwin the Pious left his dominions to his eldest son, Baldwin. Roger, the youngest, who held the county of Friesland, in right of his marriage with Gertrude de Saxe, contested his brother's title to the inheritance; and Baldwin, who was not altogether free from faults of aggression, fell in this impious war.

Meanwhile Robert, unmoved by his brother's death, persecuted his widow, Richilda de Hainault, and her children. The Princess took refuge in France, and implored the King's assistance. Matilda, on learning these painful events, was deeply moved; but fearful in the Duke's absence of embroiling her country in a war, which might prove disastrous to its interests, she resolved on sending the Sénéchal Fitz-Osborn, with a small suite, and without any apparent mission, to the relief of her brother Baldwin's children.—DEPPIN.

Fitz-Osborn was a man of great prudence, and an experienced counsellor; and it was confidently anticipated that his intervention might prove useful in this affair.

The expedition, nevertheless, was unfortunate; Arnoult, the eldest of Matilda's nephews, and Fitz-Osborn, perished in an ambuscade. The Sénéchal was beloved

by the people, so that a cry for vengeance arose from all parts of Normandy. Dreading more than ever to see the forces of her country employed in increasing the troubles which at this time overwhelmed Flanders, the Regent wrote to William, who immediately answered her appeal in person (1071). His presence sufficed to calm the storm which had gathered in the public mind. The famous battle of Cassel had already been fought, after which, Richilda, and her son Robert were set at liberty at the request of the King of France.

Robert "le Frison" might have tranquilly ascended the throne of Flanders, had not Richilda kindled new dissensions, by selling to Théoduin, Bishop of Liège, the suzerainty of Hainault. As this did not affect Normandy, William returned to England, but the following year, the Queen was again under the necessity of recalling him, to quell the insurrection of the inhabitants of Maine, which had been secretly fomented by Foulques, Count of Anjou. In the Flemish Annals is recorded the warlike disposition of Richilda of Hainault, who was constantly engaged in some new expedition, frequently commanding her army in person. This makes us the more highly appreciate the wisdom and prudence of Matilda, who took the greatest care to prevent her people from being involved in unnecessary wars; and, when she felt her own insufficiency in their behalf, she had recourse to the powerful arm of William. The rebellion of the inhabitants of Maine was subdued, when Foulques d'Anjou, enraged at the failure of his schemes, called on the Britons for assistance.

In the meantime, Lanfranc, the confidential adviser of William, to whom he had intrusted the government of England during his absence, sent him intelligence of a conspiracy formed against him in that country.

The Sénéchal, Fitz-Osborn, of whom mention has been made, left two sons at his death. The eldest Fitz-Osborn inherited the paternal domains, in Normandy; whilst the county of Hereford, a portion of the conquered kingdom, fell to the share of Roger, the youngest, who took upon himself the task of selecting a husband for his sister Emma; and entered into negotiations for her marriage with Ralph de Gaël, a noble of Brittany, and one of William's knights. William,

for certain reasons, of which we are ignorant, did not approve of this alliance. The parties concerned took no notice of the King's displeasure, and the marriage was celebrated with unusual splendour, in the city of Norwich, chief town of Norfolk, which formed part of Ralph's possessions.

At the ceremony was present, Waltheof, a Saxon earl, on whom William the Conqueror had bestowed his niece in marriage. This Princess accompanied Waltheof, attended by a brilliant retinue of young English nobles, whose love of pleasure reconciled them to the new order of things. Roger Fitz-Osborn and Ralph, acting with passionate impulse, openly expressed their triumph at having set at defiance the arbitrary will of the Conqueror. In the midst of their excitement, the young Anglo-Saxons had the imprudence to reveal the secret of the plot which had been hatched by the Saxon people. Disturbed by this communication, Waltheof, as soon as the festivities were over, went to Lanfranc, and confessed the whole of the conspiracy, hoping that, in his capacity of Regent, he would stifle the affair. But it happened otherwise. Lanfranc, as before stated, immediately sent a messenger to Normandy, to inform William of the conspiracy. On the other hand, the Princess Judith, having fixed her affections on a Norman lover, and wishing to get rid of her husband, not only revealed the plot in its fullest details, but accused Waltheof of being the promoter of it. William, on receiving this intelligence, hastened his return to England.

Roger was condemned to perpetual imprisonment; sentence of banishment was pronounced against Ralph de Gaël, who, on the first intimation of danger, had fled the country; whilst Earl Waltheof, whose trial was got through with a precipitation for which no motive can be assigned, perished on the scaffold. His last moments were soothed by all the consolations which religion could bestow, and his death was not wholly without results, for he was regarded by the English nation as a martyr, and the Norman monks confirm his reputation for sanctity.

The execution of Waltheof was followed by others of an equally cruel and revolting character.

With regard to the Princess Judith, the Queen protested energetically against the part which she had acted in this sanguinary tragedy, by forbidding her from ever again appearing at court. William, it appears, thought proper to acquiesce in the justice of this sentence; for the old English historians testify their joy in describing the grief and neglect which, for many years afterwards, this Princess was destined to endure. (THIERRY, *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*, tome 2, p. 95.)

Ralph de Gaël withdrew into Brittany, where, in concert with Foulques of Anjou, he endeavoured to excite the Duke Alain Fergant to acts of hostility against William.

Their attempts, however, were unsuccessful, for a treaty was concluded between the Dukes of Normandy and Brittany, and the marriage of Alain with Constance, William's daughter, took place at Caen, in the year 1075.

About this period, the last of Matilda's daughters who had remained with her was married to Stephen, Count of Blois. The ceremony was performed at Breteuil, but immediately afterwards, the royal party proceeded to Chartres, where the marriage festival was celebrated with all the pomp and magnificence suitable to the occasion. This was the last of earthly happiness that Matilda was fated to enjoy. It is observed in the old chronicles, that the unjust condemnation of Waltheof was fatal to William's family; for Richard, his second son, then of an age to enter the order of knighthood, when pursuing a deer in the New Forest, was so violently struck by the branch of a tree, as to inflict on him a mortal wound. He expired a few days afterwards, "comforted by the Blessed Viaticus." The Duchess had not the consolation of receiving his last sigh, and her sole comfort was derived from "multiplying her good works beyond expression," according to Ord. Vital, whose quaintness of style is singularly attractive.

After Richard's death, William Rufus and Henry Beauclerc monopolized the King's affections, to the entire exclusion of Robert.

Matilda endeavoured, by increased tenderness towards the least favoured of her sons, to make him some

amends for his father's injustice; and the Prince, it must be allowed, possessed all those brilliant qualities which are so flattering to a mother's just pride in her offspring.

He was brave, yet gentle and affectionate; "very gracious to suppliants," says the chronicle, affable, eager to please, and generous even to prodigality; but without thoughtless, and easily imposed upon.

Before the invasion of England, William had promised that, if successful, he would cede to his eldest son the Duchy of Normandy. After the conquest, Robert reminded the King of his promise. His answer is characteristic: "I am not in the habit," said he, "of stripping before I go to bed."

"What am I to do, then," cried Robert, "and how can I reward my followers?"

The King replied that if he would conduct himself as a wise and obedient son, he would have no reason to complain, and he advised Robert to follow the counsels of Lanfranc and other enlightened men, and not to allow himself to be governed by his dissolute companions.

"I came not here to listen to a lecture on morality," exclaimed Robert, impetuously, "I have had enough of them from my tutors, when they taught me my grammar."

William flew into a passion. "I swear," said he, "that, while I live, my dominions shall not be divided."

"In that case," said Robert, "I prefer entering a stranger's service to remaining here."

Then arose the violent quarrel, which Matilda had vainly attempted to prevent. (L'ABBE PREVOT, *Vie de Guillaume*, p. 394.)

The Pope, on being informed of this dissension, wrote to the young Prince; and after reminding him of the glorious achievements of his father, he exhorted him, as he valued his mother's peace of mind, to avoid all causes of offence to the King, and to beware of evil counsellors.

Robert, touched as it seemed by this advice, withdrew from court, and went to visit Matilda's relations

in Flanders. In order to spare her son the humiliation of living at their expense, the Queen sent him supplies of money. (THIERRY, *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*, tome 1, p. 335.)

The King, on hearing of this, was greatly irritated. "The observation of a certain philosopher is true," said he, "and I have only too much cause to admit its justice: 'The woman who deceives her husband, is the cause of her own ruin.' Who can henceforward hope to find a faithful and devoted companion? Behold my wife, she whom I love with my whole soul, whom I have entrusted with the government of my kingdom, my treasures, nay, my own honour, even she supports my enemies, enriches them with my own wealth, displays her zeal in their behalf, and aids them in their very attempts against my crown."

The Queen replied, "My lord, I pray you be not surprised if I feel a mother's tenderness for my first-born son. By the virtues of the Most High, I protest that if my son Robert were dead, and buried seven feet deep in the earth, and the price of my blood alone could restore him to life, I would cheerfully bid it flow. For his sake I would fearlessly endure such suffering as in a less noble cause the feebleness of my sex would dread to encounter." She then added, with firmness, that the authority of the King could not extend so far as to interdict a mother from bestowing her superfluous wealth on her son, who was sinking from want and misery.

But William's anger rendered him deaf to this touching reply. He seized Matilda's messenger, a native of Lower Brittany, who had more than once given proofs of fidelity to the Queen, and threw him into prison. This man, however, who was named Samson, effected his escape, and became a professed monk in the monastery of Ouche, "in happy hour both for his body and soul," is the quaint observation of the chronicle. Matilda commended him to the pious abbot, Mainier; and, notwithstanding the motives which had led to his adoption of his vocation, Samson's example was fraught with the greatest benefit to his brethren.

Matilda's courageous and generous conduct, in these

fatal divisions, seems to have made a deep impression on the common people, if we may judge from an incident transmitted to us by tradition. It is related that the Queen, accompanied by William, was traversing one of the principal streets of Caen, when happening to express an opinion offensive to the feelings of the irascible monarch, he burst into a fit of uncontrollable passion, seized Matilda by the hair, and fastening her to the tail of his horse, dragged her through the streets, heedless of her supplications. When, struck by remorse, he at length stopped, and released his victim, she rose without uttering a word of reproach, and, on the spot where her tortures had ceased, the Queen erected a cross, which, at her desire, was called "La Croix pleureuse." (*The weeping Cross*.) This monument, the real origin of which is unknown, stood for several centuries. But how much of melancholy interest is attached to this tradition, and how eloquently it portrays the character of the Queen, who was believed to be so generous and forgiving, as to allow no memorial to mark the spot where she had received so great an outrage, save the pledge of eternal forgiveness.

An article, which is not devoid of interest on the subject of this tradition, is to be found in "L' Apologie pour la défense de Guillaume le Conquérant, par MATHIEU DE LA DANGIE, cellérier de l'Abbaye de St. Etienne à Caen."

Matilda soon learned that, harassed by the intrigues of the Court of France, Robert was preparing to take up arms against his father.

A prey to the most dreadful anguish, and influenced by the superstitions of the times, Matilda determined to consult a German hermit, who was reputed to possess the gift of prophecy. Her messengers returned with "some agreeable, and some afflicting predictions." Robert was to live many years longer, and to reign in Normandy; but, eventually, he was to be hated by his subjects, and despised by the neighbouring princes. The chroniclers are accused of having framed these prophecies to accord with the course of subsequent events. However this may be, the Queen, in her consultations with the holy man, testified an equal solicitude for the

welfare of her husband and her son, and an ardent desire that their dissensions should cease.

Unfortunately, it formed part of the policy of Philip the First, King of France, to favour the malcontents in Normandy. Several Norman nobles, disappointed in their ambitious hopes, joined the young Prince, who, taking the command of the party, soon possessed himself of the Castle of Gerberoy, in Beauvoisis. William was informed of this immediately on his return from England, and placing himself at the head of his troops, he marched against the insurgents.

Thus attacked, Robert attempted a sortie. Observing a knight, whose features were entirely concealed by his closed visor, but whose bravery distinguished him from the rest of his troops, he rode at him, and striking him with the head of his lance, unhorsed the stranger. The vanquished knight uttered an exclamation—the Prince started, on hearing the familiar voice, and throwing himself on his knees before him, implored his forgiveness: for it was his own father he had struck.

The deep contrition of the culprit; possibly, the valour of which he had himself but just felt the effects, or the tears and supplications of the Queen, or in all probability, all these combined causes, effectually appeased William's anger. He took his son with him to England, and gave him the command of an army, with orders to repel the invasions of the King of Scotland.

Robert gained a complete victory, and everything seemed to promise a sincere reconciliation, when news arrived that the incorrigible Prince had deserted the army, and again sought the service of a foreign prince. On this, the King's anger knew no bounds, and he pronounced against his son a bitter malediction (1081). This was a mortal blow to Matilda, and, from that moment, her health gradually declined. Before her death, however, she had the happiness of experiencing a return of her husband's affection.

As soon as William was apprised of the Queen's danger, he set sail for Normandy; but, though he made all haste, he did not arrive in time to witness her last moments. Her will has been preserved, and the following enumeration of Matilda's possessions, which gives

an idea of the riches of that period, will not be perused without interest :—

“I bequeath to the abbey of the Holy Trinity my tunic, worked at Winchester, by Alderet’s wife, and the mantle embroidered with gold, which is in my chamber, to make a cope. Of my two golden girdles, I give that which is ornamented with emblems, to serve for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great altar.

“I give my large candelabra, made at St. Lo, my crown, my sceptre, my cups in their cases, another cup made in England, with all my horse trappings, and all my vessels, except those which I may have already disposed of in my lifetime ; and, lastly, I give the lands of Quetchou and Cotentin, with two dwellings in England, and I have made all these bequests with the consent of my husband,” a last proof of Matilda’s deference to the will of him whose indomitable temper had often been softened in her favour.

Matilda was forty-six years of age when she died. In obedience to her wishes, she was interred in the abbey of the Holy Trinity, at Caen, which she had founded, and of which her daughter Matilda was the abbess. Her funeral was celebrated with the greatest pomp, and she was followed to the grave by a vast concourse of people of all ranks, whose sobs and lamentations were heard high above the chanting of the priests. The King himself, the stern conqueror, was seen to shed tears. (RICHER, *Vie de Guillaume le Conquérant*, t. 1, p. 317.)

The epitaph graven on Matilda’s tomb, unites a well deserved eulogy with a touching sentiment.

“She loved piety, and she comforted the needy ; sparing to herself, to the indigent her hand was ever open. It was by such deeds, that she sought that life immortal, which she entered on the 2nd of November, 1083.”

Note by the Translator.—Madame Emma L. states that, according to the Flemish Chronicle, Matilda was born in 1035. Some authors, with more probability, assign an earlier date to that event ; and suppose that Matilda was fifty-two years of age when she died.

Thierry and other French and English historians make no mention of Matilda's age.

The following copy of a paper read before the Sussex Archæological Society, at the Town Hall, Brighton, on the 20th September, 1846, by J. A. Pickford, Esq., M.D., M.R.I.A., and which gives a most authentic description of the tomb of Matilda, as it now stands in the Abbaye aux Dames, at Caen, may not be thought uninteresting. By the kind permission of Dr. Pickford, we are enabled to give it to our readers:—

ON THE TOMB OF MAUD OR MATILDA.

Whilst engaged, some months since, in preparing a paper on the discovery in the grounds of the Cluniac Priory, at Southover, of the remains of the Lady Gundred, daughter of William the Conqueror, by his Queen Mathilda, and of her Lord, the first Earl de Warrene, I made application to Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Caen, in Normandy, Mr. Peter Barrow, for a copy of the marble slab surmounting the tomb of Queen Maud, or Mathilda, in the Benedictine Nunnery in that city, in order that I might compare it with that in Southover Church to the memory of the Lady Gundred. Mr. Barrow received my application in the kindest possible spirit, and entered most warmly into the object of my inquiries. The result I have now the pleasure of laying before this Society.

I may, perhaps, be excused for premising that the Abbaye aux Dames, or Abbey of the Holy Trinity, at Caen, was founded by Duchess Mathilda, about the year 1064, in pursuance of a mandate from Pope Nicholas II., as an atonement for having married within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity.* The Queen, who died early in the morning of the 2nd of November, 1083, was interred, with much regal pomp and grandeur, near the middle of the choir of the Abbey Church, and at a convenient distance from the lowermost step of the high altar.† Her tomb, which was most elaborately sculptured, and profusely bestudded with gold, silver, and precious stones, was surmounted by a coffin-shaped slab of black marble, on which was carved, in old Norman characters, an epitaph in monkish rhyming Latin, which forms the more immediate subject of this paper.

During the religious wars of 1562, this gorgeous tomb was subjected to the fury of the Huguenots. The figure of the Queen, which lay thereon, was thrown down, and, with the ornamental sculpture of the monument, broken in pieces; the grave was torn open, and the Royal remains were subjected to violence and insult.

* *Anglo-Norman Antiquities*, by Doctor Ducarel, p. 50, London, 1767.

† Op. cit. p. 63.

The several parts of the Queen's tomb were carefully collected and religiously preserved by the nuns, by whose pious zeal a monument of black and white marble, three feet high and six feet long, was in 1707 placed over her grave, together with the broken fragments of the former magnificent monument. The black marble slab which surmounted the original monument was let into the top of the new marble work, and protected on every side by a row of perpendicular iron spikes, about three inches in length, set in the new work; two Latin inscriptions, in letters of gold, were placed on tablets on the sides of the new monument, the one on the south or right, and the other on the north or left side, and, in an escutcheon, at the head, were emblazoned the arms of the Conqueror, two lions, *or*, and in another escutcheon at the feet was a crown, *or*.

During the revolution of 1793, Mathilda's monument was again doomed to destruction. Her remains had, however, been previously removed to the Hôtel Dieu by the nuns for safety.

In 1819, a new white marble structure was raised to her memory. The original black marble slab was carefully let into the top of the new masonry, and, in addition to the two Latin inscriptions on the sides, one in French was placed at the foot, in lieu of the escutcheon containing the crown.

Previously to laying before the Society a *fac-simile* of the inscription on the monumental slab, and copies of the three other inscriptions on the sides and foot of the restored monument, I shall crave a few minutes' attention whilst I read some extracts from his letters to me of Her Majesty's Consul at Caen, as they stamp a degree of authenticity upon my copies of the inscriptions, not possessed by those of Ducarel, who could, of necessity, furnish copies of three only of them. Upon comparing my copy of the inscription on the original slab with Ducarel,* it will be seen that there are, in his version, many inaccuracies.

On the 4th of December, 1845, Mr. Barrow writes me—"The tomb of Queen Maud or Mathilda, in the chapel of the Abbaye aux Dames, or Abbey of the Holy Trinity, is a large white structure, the height of a table from the ground, *quite new*, over the spot where Mathilda was buried, and where her remains still are.

- * Egregie pulchri tegit hæc structura sepulchri :
 Moribus insignem germen regale Matildem
 Dux Flandrita pater hinc extitit Adala mater
 Francorum gentis Roberti filia regis
 Et soror Henrici regali sede potiti ;
 Regi magnifico Vilelmo juncta marito :
 Presentem sedem recenter fecit et idem
 Tam multis terris quam multis rebus honestis
 A se ditatam se procurante dicatam
 Hæc consolatrix inopum pietatis amatricx :
 Gasie dispersis pauper sibi dives egenis
 Hic infinite petit consortia vite
 In prima mensis post primam luce Novembris.

Pp. 63, 65.

The original black slab, supposed to be the identical stone which was placed over her at her death, is carefully let in on the surface of this new masonry. Thus far," says he, "our researches are satisfactory; but now comes the grand difficulty, namely, that no person whatever is allowed to enter this chapel, except the nuns. The chief doctor of the Hospital of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity has kindly interested himself in the matter, and has procured from the nuns a copy of the three inscriptions recently placed around the new masonry, but these good women, who do not profess much literary knowledge, inform him, to my great sorrow, that they are unable to copy the most important part, because it is '*all Greek*.' I have now, as a last resource, made application to the Bishop of the Diocese, for permission to enter the chapel with a draughtsman, to obtain an exact copy of the stone. In the meantime I may state that in the subterranean chapel of l'Hôtel Dieu is a small stone altar which marks the place where the remains of Mathilda were deposited during the revolution of 1793, having been removed, for safety, by the pious care of the nuns from their original place. They were replaced after the Revolution, and the stone carefully preserved. I have also found six pieces of fine carved stone, supposed to be remains of the chapiters which supported the stone, and a bust, without head or arms, with gilt drapery, and three diagonal belts in front, supposed to have been the bust of Queen Maud."

On the 23rd of December, 1845, Mr. Barrow writes, that "after a very long delay, and much difficulty, he has procured the copy of the inscription on the monumental slab. You may depend," says he, "upon its being most mechanically correct, letter for letter. Some of the letters appear unfinished; the missing portions are no longer visible on the stone. The second central line is in larger characters than the others. I believe there is not the slightest doubt that this is the identical stone which was placed at the death of Queen Maud. After the last revolution (1830), the Préfet, the Rector of the Academy, and other authorities, with the Bishop of Bayeux, caused the ground underneath where the stone stands to be opened, in order to ascertain, positively, whether the bones of Mathilda had been disturbed or not by the fanatical fury of the Calvinists. They discovered a leaden case with several remains inside, even to the hinder part of the skull, with the hair cut in the peculiar manner in which Queen Mathilda used to wear her hair. In short, there is not a shadow of doubt that the remains are, to this day, under the spot where stands the tumulus. There are no traces of any ornamental work on the surface of the slab, such as you describe to be upon Gundred's."

The following is a copy of the inscription on the coffin-shaped marble slab:—

Egregie pulchri tegit hæc structura sepulchri:
Moribus insignem germen regale Mathildem
Dux Flandrita pater huic extitit Adala mater
Francorum gentis Roberti filia regis

Et soror Henrici regali sede potiti:
 Regi magnifico Wilhelmo juncta marito:
 Præsentem sedem præsentem fecit et sedem
 Tam multis terris quam multis rebus honestis
 A se ditatam se procurante dicatam
 Hæc consolatrix inopum pietatis amatrix:
 Gazis dispersis pauper sibi dives egenis
 Sic infinitæ petit consortia vitæ
 In prima mensis post primam luce Novembria.

Of this the following is a tolerably close translation:—

This structure of a very beautiful sepulchre covers
 Mathilda, of royal race, illustrious for her morals.
 The Count of Flanders was her father. Adala, her mother,
 Was daughter of Robert, King of the Franks.
 And sister of Henry, who afterwards enjoyed the royal seat.
 Married to the illustrious King William:
 She built this present edifice and this temple,
 And when enriched by her both by many lands and by
 Many munificent deeds, it was dedicated at her request.
 This solacer of the needy, this lover of piety,
 Poor to herself, but rich to the poor by her great liberality,
 Thus sought the fellowship of life immortal
 At the early dawn after the first day of November.

The other three inscriptions are—

On the south or right side.

Reginæ Matheldis pretiosos cineres
 Qui a furore hereticorum servati sunt
 Linteo pie involutos
 Capsula plumbea inclusit
 Et honoris causa tumulum hunc humo adæquatum
 Non quidem regio apparatu
 Sed memori et digno ut potuit cultu

On the north or left side.

Super his erexit
 Ornavitque illustrissima et religiosissima
 Domina Gabriela Francisca de Froullai de Tesse
 Hujusce monasterii abbatiassa
 Cujus pietate tam nobile magnificum
 Altare fuit Christo nascenti consecratum
 Uno eodemque anno
 1707.

At the foot.

Ce tombeau renfermant les dépouilles mortelles
De l'illustre fondatrice de cette abbaye
Renversé pendant les discordes civiles
Et déplacé depuis une longue série d'années

A été restauré

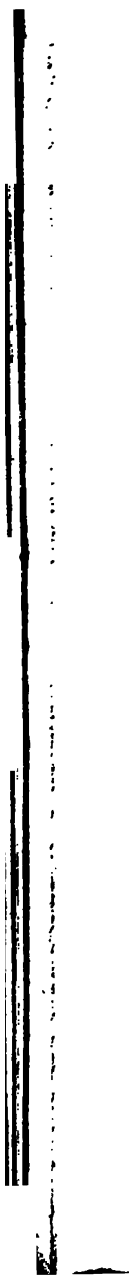
Conformément au vœu des amis de la religion
De l'antiquité et des arts

1819

Par l'ordre

De Casimir Comte de Bontlévault, Conseiller d'Etat, Préfet,
Et les soins

De l'Echaudé d'Anisy, directeur, et Haro Rom ain, Architecte.



REB V, BOHES TIS + EGREGIUM HABITUM	STRUTRAS CIT L JRI MORIBVS HSIGIT EG
	SE DITATIM SEP RO EVR AN TEDIC
	IMAM LE EN OVIMBIS
	IMM: // MISTERS QVA MVLIS

IMP.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

ABRIDGED FROM M. LANCELOT'S DESCRIPTION OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

GIVEN IN THE ATLAS TO THIERRY'S HISTOIRE DE LA CONQUETE
DE L'ANGLETERRE.

Each section of the Tapestry, or historical event, is divided by trees or edifices rudely sketched, such as are seen in antique bas-reliefs.

1. King Edward giving audience to Harold, and allowing, or commanding him to depart for Normandy.
2. Harold on his way to Bosham (a village in Sussex, at that time a frequented seaport).*
3. Chapel—Harold at his devotions.
4. Harold at a banquet.
5. Embarkation of Harold.
6. Harold, driven by a storm on the coast of Picardy, is made prisoner by Guy de Ponthieu.
7. Harold supposed to be treating for his ransom with Guy.
8. Arrival of the Duke of Normandy's ambassadors to demand the liberty of Harold.
9. Turoid, officer of the Duke's household, holding two horses by the bridle.
10. Guy having refused the demand of William, the Duke despatches his messengers a second time.
11. Messenger informs William that Guy consents to release Harold.
12. Castle of Beauvain (on the river Canche), where Harold had been detained by Guy.
13. Guy de Ponthieu, followed by Harold, whom he is conducting to the Duke of Normandy.
14. Duke of Normandy meeting Guy and Harold.
15. William conducting Harold to the Ducal Palace at Rouen.
16. Knight at the Palace gate ordering a sentinel to admit the Duke and his suite.
17. Sentinel.
18. William supposed to be disclosing to Harold his intention of taking possession of the throne of England on the death of Edward.

* Bosham Church, dedicated to Holy Trinity, is partly in the early style of English architecture, and partly in that which prevailed in the 14th century. The font is Saxon. Bosham, in Saxon Bosen-ham, from its being a *ham* or *vill*, surrounded with woods, is frequently mentioned by the ancient chroniclers.

19. *Ælf-giva* (supposed to be the ceremony of her betrothal).
20. William.
21. Harold.
22. Departure of William's army for Brittany, under the command of William and Harold.
23. Mont St. Michel, near Avranches.
24. The army fording the river Coesnon, which divides Normandy from Brittany.
25. Harold rescuing the army from its perilous situation among the quicksands at Coesnon.
26. Dol besieged by Conan—William raises the siege, and enters the town.
27. Retreat of Conan to Rennes.
28. William's army proceeds to attack Dinan.
29. Surrender of Dinan.
30. Keys of the city delivered to Harold.
31. William creates Harold a knight.
32. Arrival of William and Harold at Bayeux.
33. Harold taking a solemn oath on the sacred relics.
34. Norman Nobles.
35. Harold returning to England.
36. Harold arrives in England.
37. Harold proceeds to the King's palace.
38. Edward the Confessor gives audience to Harold.
39. Bellringer.
40. Westminster Abbey.
41. Hand in the sky pointing to the Abbey. (This emblem is found on the medals of the last emperors of Constantinople, and is supposed to imply that they held the crown from the hand of God Himself. The same emblem is seen above the head of Charles the Bold, in the magnificent Bible which that Prince presented to the Church at Metz. In the Tapestry, it is probably intended to point out that the abbey is peculiarly a sacred edifice.)
42. Funeral of Edward the Confessor.
43. Illness of Edward—Woman weeping, &c.—Edward is supposed to give a reluctant consent to Harold's succeeding him on the throne.
44. Death of Edward.
45. Offer made to Harold of the Crown.
46. Harold on his throne.
47. Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury.
48. Homage of Harold's subjects.
49. People alarmed at the sight of a comet.
50. Comet.
51. Harold—Messenger informing him of the descent of the Norwegians.
52. Saxon ship, conveying the intelligence to William that Harold had taken possession of the throne.
53. Robert, William's half-brother.
54. William gives orders that ships should be built immediately.
55. Hewing down timber.
56. Ships in course of construction.

57. Launching ships.
58. Conveying provisions and arms to the ships.
59. William on his march to Dives.
60. Passage of William's fleet to England.*
61. William's ship.
62. Landing of the horses.
63. Unladen vessels.
64. William, having landed with his army before the provisions had been brought on shore, sends to procure some at Hastings.
65. Men returning with cattle, &c.
66. Wadard (supposed to be purveyor to the army).
67. Cooking, and preparing for a festival.
68. Carrying viands to table.
69. William presiding at a banquet.
70. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, blesses the meat and drink.
71. Robert, Comte de Mortain, William's half-brother.
72. William gives orders to erect a fortification on the spot where his army had landed near Pevensey.
73. Fortress, or Castle.
74. Messenger informs William of the advance of Harold.
75. Houses destroyed by fire—escape of woman and child.
76. William at the gate of a fortress.
77. William's charger brought to him.
78. William's army marching to oppose Harold.
79. Seneschal, bearing on his lance William's ducal crown.
80. Robert, Comte de Mortain.
81. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux
82. William.
83. Vital, supposed to have been sent to reconnoitre, reports that Harold's army is close at hand.
84. Knights, on an eminence, watching the movements of the Saxon army.
85. Spy from Harold's camp.
86. Return of the spy to Harold.
87. Harold.
88. William harangues his army.
89. Commencement of battle.
90. Height taken possession of by the Saxons.
91. Saxons dismount, and form serried ranks.
92. Death of Gurth and Leofwin, brothers of Harold.
93. Normans repulsed by Saxons.
94. Odo arresting flight of Normans.
95. Battle continues.
96. William removes his helmet, and shows himself to his alarmed followers, saying, "I still live," &c.
97. The battle rages furiously, and Harold's soldiers fall.—Death of Harold.
98. Soldier striking dead body of Harold.
99. Death of Norman Knight.
100. Normans in pursuit of the defeated and flying Saxons.

* The fleet was composed of 3000 ships, 700 of which were employed in transporting provisions, horses, and arms, &c.

